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The Mennonite

New director begins

Ervin Stutzman is Mennonite Church USA's new executive director

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INSIDE:
- Special section on Mennonite education
- Far from home
- Celebrating Sabbath in a busy world
- We can make music
- Editorial: Turning the page

Mennonite Church
USA

THANK YOU!

I thank my God through
Jesus Christ for all of you,
because your faith is proclaimed
throughout the world.
The Apostle Paul—Romans 8:1

Mennonite Church USA agencies and programs exist to equip all parts of the church for ministry—locally, nationally and around the world. Your gifts this past year have strengthened, encouraged and sent us into God's world to be the hands, feet and voice of Jesus. In our challenging economy your faithful sharing is gratefully appreciated.

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TheMennonite
January 2010 | Volume 13, Number 1

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

How to read the Bible

In "How to Read the Bible" (Dec. 1, 2009), Myron Deckert put the matter exactly right. If simplistic, flat reading of the Bible just won't do, we still need to find another way to read it appreciatively, seriously, profoundly. We, that is, who as people and as church have committed ourselves to follow Jesus Christ.

By far the main source for leading Jesus' disciples—to understand him and the God of whom he taught—will always be the Bible. Such understanding, as best we can, comes above all through biblical history, biblical literature and biblical covenant (both personal and corporate).

Fortunately, we have wonderful help in the Believers Church Bible Commentaries. I have found them invaluable both intellectually and devotionally. They lead us to understand the many forms Scriptures take—written narrative, oral tales, poetry, history, prophecy, exhortation, parable and more—in ways that helps us extract rather than dismiss the biblical message. They set Scriptures in cultural and historical context in a manner that enhances understanding rather than sinking our faith into relativism. They offer the Bible and biblical commentary as supreme sources for our discipleship but without making the Bible an idol. Working with them, we remain committed to Jesus and Jesus' personal, loving, reconciling God, not to a book. Yet we continue to understand what an indispensable treasure the Bible is for our faith and our faithfulness. So thank God for Myron Deckert's article and for the Believers Church Bible Commentaries.—*Theron F. Schlabach, Goshen, Ind.*

Between 'scholarly' and 'personal'

I would like to thank *The Mennonite* for the beautiful article by Marion Deckert ("How to Read the Bible," Dec. 1, 2009). He has pointed to a serious problem in our churches today. We seem to be lost in a no man's land between the "scholarly" word and the strictly personal word ("That's what the Bible means to me."). Deckert calls for "an authentic, nontechnical, serious way to read the Bible." I would suggest that this is the job of the sermon and the community's response to the sermon. We need to devote more time in our services to such communal acts of discernment.—*Mitchell Brown, Evanston, Ill.*

Newest members will lead us

Regarding "Pastors Group Raises Concerns About MC USA" (Dec. 1, 2009): The letter is signed by pastors with the last names Chigoji, Chukwukelu, Fatunmbi, Hamlin, Handoyo, Zacheus, Hannanto, Jachin, Kusuma, Koeshadi, Mustangin, Moeljono, Kouttjie, Massamba, Opong, Pam and Pitts.

I list the names because Stanley W. Green, president of the Mennonite Mission Network has said ("Leadership," Nov. 4, 2008) to be Mennonite is by witness, not by family name. He said, "If we take seriously the demographic trends in Mennonite Church USA that show the growing edge being among new immigrant communities from Africa, Asia and Central and South America, then we must think differently about our identity."

Then he gave the clincher; listen carefully: "Some claim Mennonite identity even when they are not members of a church or make any confession of following Jesus. This preoccupation with a cultural Mennonite identity flies in the face of our confession of a faith not defined by allegiances of ethnicity or race, of flag or nation."

This true statement is confirmed by a quick look at the last names of the original signatures on the "Open Letter" promoting a "radical hospitality" that confuses God's desire for a holy people. The last names there are a perfect list for someone wanting to play the Eurocentric and exclusive "Mennonite name game." This attitude is reflected in the Readers Say letter published Dec. 1, 2009 asking, "Should that not be balanced by a story on a person with same-sex orientation that lives in a committed same-sex relationship, respects the church and wants to continue in it because of lifelong association and commitment to its Anabaptist ideals?"

I join the voices of the immigrant leaders and countless others who are too scared to speak up, in a call to return to our confession of a faith with clarity and love. I hope our newest members will lead us there.—*Joy Kauffman, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

Dismayed at listing of names

Thanks for making marriage and birth announcements available by mail. I am dismayed that it is deemed relevant to list names of people who donate beyond the subscription price in the Dec.15, 2009, issue.—*Vera L. Steiner, Goshen, Ind.*

Don't waste a crisis

Regarding Everett Thomas' editorial "Don't Waste a Crisis" (Dec. 15, 2009): I'm learning the value of a crisis all over again. And now, in supporting others, we are making a crisis pay dividends of life purpose clarity.

After experiencing "success" in my life and career, I hit a wall in my early 50s when I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. I lost the self-confidence and optimism that had characterized my life to that point. I became depressed as the sense of clarity and direction I had been enjoying slipped away. For several years I vacillated between believing my productive life was over and the inclination to fight for more. Then, with the priceless support of my wife, a close friend and a mentor, I was able to declare that I'm not done.

This turning point started a quest to discover the keys to knowing what I'm still here for and connecting with my life's God-given purpose. Now I'm living with confidence—and Parkinson's—but beyond what I could have imagined.

So as pastor/life coach, I ask, Are you at a crossroads, perhaps coming to terms with life-changing circumstances? Feel like you're meant to do "something more" but are "lost" and don't know where to start? If you feel stuck—without a road map—you don't need to struggle alone. You might benefit from additional support to shift from confusion to hope. Seek out the support that will guide and challenge you in more fully embracing your authentic divine purpose and, based on what I've seen through disaster experience, you will see confusion and uncertainty turn into hope.—*Walter Sawatzky, Hatfield, Pa.*

Great choice for cover

When I got the Dec. 15, 2009, issue of *The Mennonite*, I immediately recognized He Qi's work on the cover. Great choice. I met him at Wheaton College's 2009 Annual Theology Conference. He Qi's work is inspiring. Check out his Washing Disciples' Feet painting sometime.—*Tyler Hartford, Goshen, Ind.*

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue is the culmination of a process that began last June. The goal: to redesign *The Mennonite* so that it complies more closely with the graphic standards established by Mennonite Church USA. These include the fonts we use as well as the color palette. But this criterion was just one of many that entered into the redesign.

Dee Birkey, our freelance designer, researched current thinking among designers of print publications. She incorporated many of the ideas into this design so that what you see is an aggregate of this research.

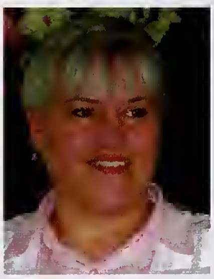
But the editorial content has also changed. We have added several new features to the format. These include the new Miscellany section (pages 10-11) with news from the broader church and world, a new column by and about young adults, called New Voices (page 58), a News Analysis section (page 46) and a crossword puzzle from the person who created the puzzles for *Our-Faith Digest* (page 61).

We will also increase the amount of original content. In addition to the cover story introducing new Mennonite Church USA executive director Ervin Stutzman (page 12) and other feature articles (pages 16 to 35), three of our news articles are released here first.

A redesign is a balancing act: We wanted to freshen the look and content but not depart so radically from what our readers want, so they don't think it's a completely different magazine. To that end we will continue one of the most-read columns (Grace and Truth) near the front of each issue (page 6). We will also make sure the letters section begins on this spread (page 4).

The Mennonite will now come to you once each month as a 64-pager. We hope you are pleased.—*Editor*

Continuing education



Donna Mast serves half-time as a pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church and half-time as interim conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

Life is just one big continuing education opportunity, if one is of that mind set. There are many opportunities throughout life to continue one's education, and one need not enter a program, attend a seminar or go to classes to expand one's knowledge. However, I have entered a program to become better educated in one specific area.

Thanks to some encouragement to consider it and the assistance of some scholarship money, I am taking part in the Values-Based Leadership Program. Offered through the Institute for Anabaptist Leaders and held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., the program seeks to help people become the leaders God is inviting us to become.

Participants pay attention to their faith as well as life experiences as they are encouraged to grow in five areas, called core values. These core values are Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart.

We met for two and a half days and will meet again for another two and a half days. In between we have homework to do. We also are expected to check in with the peer coach we were assigned—peer because we are both participants in the program and coach because we are to be coaching and encouraging one another.

During a three-way phone conversation with my peer coach and our group leader, I listened to a story of good leadership and heard all five core values in the story. When I told the other two what I had heard, Lee Schmucker, our group leader, said, "Donna, I think you have your next article for *The Mennonite*." So I asked my peer coach for permission to tell her story.

Life is just one big continuing education opportunity, if one is of that mind-set.

My peer coach is Ruth Yoder Wenger, pastor of North Bronx (N.Y.) Mennonite Church. As she led a baptism class in understanding Mennonites, Ruth realized that the congregation's 20-year-old mission statement no longer fit the current group. The words were too big and unfamiliar for some who had less education than the writers of the earlier mission statement or for some whose first language was not English.

Challenge the process: Ruth decided they needed a new mission statement. In doing so, Ruth was challenging the process. She looked at what was and wondered if it should be. Was the mission statement serving its purpose? Clearly it was not. It may have been good at one time, but now it needed to be replaced with something that better fit the people of North Bronx Mennonite Church.

Model the way: But Ruth wasn't going to write the new mission statement alone. She needed the voices of those in her congregation. As Ruth led them in a process of naming who they are and what is important to them as people of North Bronx, she displayed another core value—modeling the way. Ruth demonstrated for them how to enter the conversation as she explained the process and entered it herself.

Enable others to act: As Ruth invited others into the process, encouraging them each to be a part of the process, others were enabled to act. In her gentle way, space was made for all to take part. Together they named what they thought most important and vital to the life of their church.

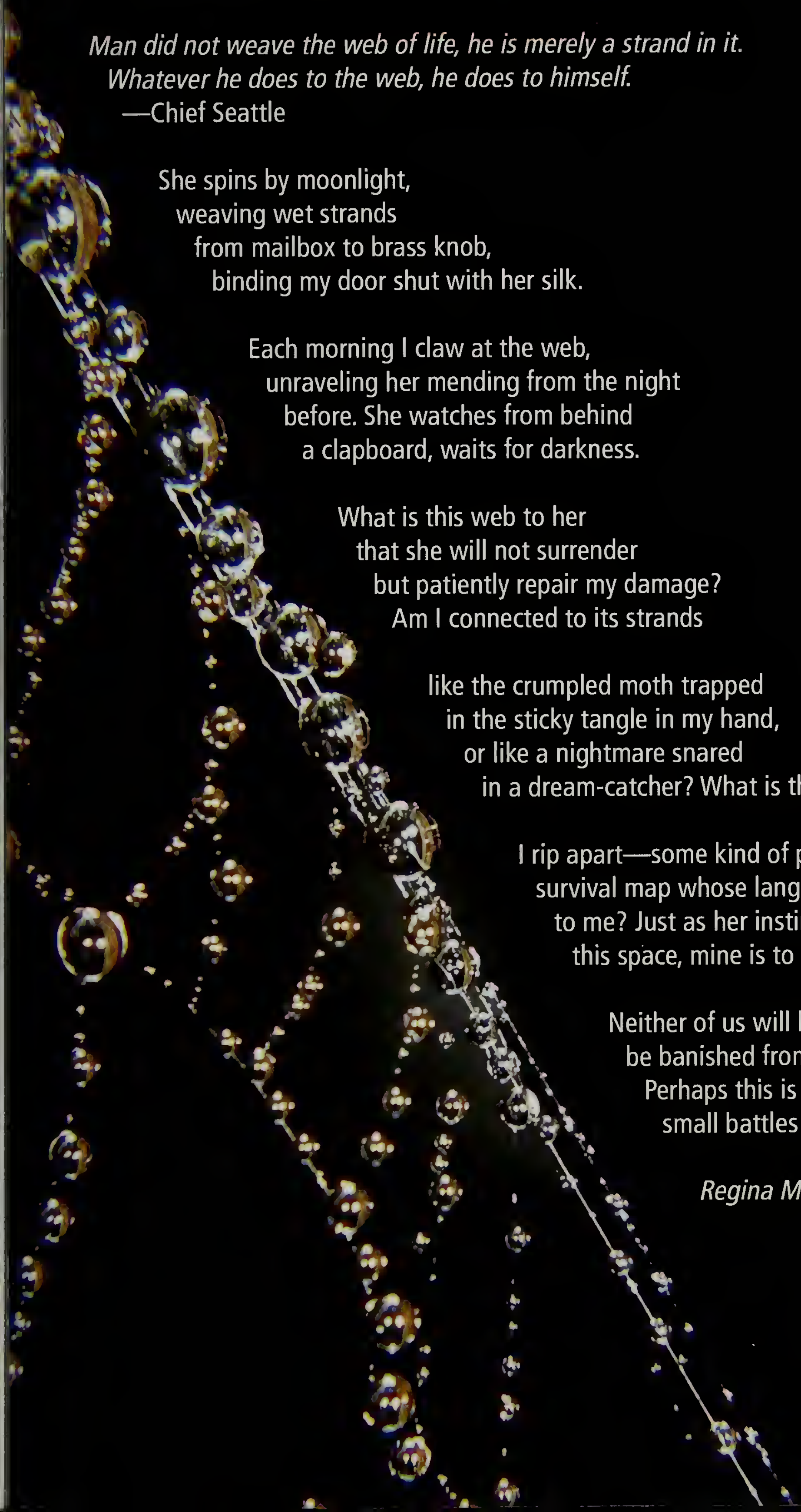
Inspire a shared vision: Working together, they discovered that what they were naming were things they were already doing. Soon a new mission statement had been fashioned out of those things they had named. Together they wrote a lovely, simple mission statement that fit them. Ruth had inspired a shared vision.

Encourage the heart: The people of North Bronx now have a mission statement they can remember easily. The words are simple and grew out of their work together. Their hearts are encouraged as they live into their mission statement, together doing the work God has called them to do in their part of the world.

No doubt education will continue in North Bronx Mennonite Church as Ruth works with her congregation and they learn from each other. I learned as I listened to the story and realized how each of the core values was present in the story. I hope to continue to learn because life is just one big continuing education opportunity, if one is of that mind set. TM

At either end of the web

by Regina Murray Brault



Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.
—Chief Seattle

She spins by moonlight,
weaving wet strands
from mailbox to brass knob,
binding my door shut with her silk.

Each morning I claw at the web,
unraveling her mending from the night
before. She watches from behind
a clapboard, waits for darkness.

What is this web to her
that she will not surrender
but patiently repair my damage?
Am I connected to its strands

like the crumpled moth trapped
in the sticky tangle in my hand,
or like a nightmare snared
in a dream-catcher? What is this thing

I rip apart—some kind of primitive
survival map whose language has been lost
to me? Just as her instinct is to claim
this space, mine is to tear down obstacles.

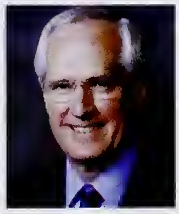
Neither of us will back down. One has to go,
be banished from this struggle over territory.
Perhaps this is the way all wars begin—
small battles fought in strands of gossamer.

Regina Murray Brault lives in Burlington, Vt.

Scholarship for Mennonite high school graduates

GOSHEN, Ind.—Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., announced on Dec. 8, 2009, that it will guarantee $40,000 in institutional scholarships over four years for any graduate of a Mennonite high school.

Qualifying students must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and an ACT score of 19 or SAT score of 890 to qualify for the Mennonite Heritage Scholarship.



"This scholarship is a way to serve individuals," said Bethel's interim president John Sheriff on Dec. 10, 2009, "to build the church—since graduates of Mennonite colleges are among those most loyal to the church—and to strengthen the college in its mission. We make this major scholarship available to all [Mennonite high school students] … not just those with very high grade point averages and ACT scores."

Bethel has not normally attracted many Mennonite high school students, whereas a school such as Goshen (Ind.) College has 20 percent of its student body from Mennonite high schools.

"We're trying to attract students who have not normally come here because there are no Mennonite high schools nearby," said Todd Moore, vice president for admissions, on Dec. 10.

Although Bethel has had some students from Mennonite high schools, most Mennonite high schools are in the East and distant from Bethel.

"We've had some great students from Mennonite high schools and hope to get more," Moore said.

None of the other Mennonite Church USA four-year colleges and universities has a similar scholarship; none is currently planning to create one.—*Everett J. Thomas*

A 'holy extravaganza'

SOUDERTON, Pa.—Franconia Conference moderator Blaine Detwiler of Susquehanna, Pa., suggested that the annual conference assembly might be a "holy extravaganza." And indeed it was, held at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Nov. 13-14, 2009, around the theme "Cultivating Healthy and Growing Leaders." The extravaganza kicked off with a multiethnic worship team from across conference congregations and singing that moved seamlessly among the conference's four worshiping languages—English, Indonesian, Spanish and Vietnamese. The assembly pulled together people from global partners, denominational ministries, congregations and conference-related ministries for stories, worship, business, fellowship and workshops.—*Franconia Conference*

Allan Sauder

MEDA helps banana co-ops

An employee of a cooperative in Peru prepares bananas for shipping to Europe and the United States. Mennonite Economic Development Associates has been helping cooperatives streamline their certification procedures to maintain the requirements of Fair Trade and organic distributors and thus gain a premium price.—*MEDA*

Radio program launches

HARRISONBURG, Va.—*Shaping Families*, a new 15-minute weekly radio program launched Jan. 2 on at least one set of stations in eastern Pennsylvania and tentatively also on stations in California, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia. The main focus of the program will be in-depth interviews with people sharing their stories of grief, mental illness, difficulty over tough parenting issues, surviving the suicide of a loved one, serving others, strength in community, poverty, disaster, divorce, aging and more. Burton Buller, director of Third Way Media for Mennonite Mission Network, will host the program. The inaugural stations are both in the eastern Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey area: WBYN-AM 1160 at 10 a.m. Saturdays and WCHR-AM 920 at 3:30 p.m. Saturdays.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Student recovers after train accident

GOSHEN, Ind.—Goshen College sophomore Daniel Martin of Salem, Ore., was injured in a train accident early in the morning on Dec. 8, 2009, but is healing from his non-life-threatening injuries. The accident happened south of the college campus, and Martin received treatment at South Bend Memorial Hospital for a leg injury. The Goshen Police Department investigated the circumstances of the accident. The college's campus ministries led a prayer service for Martin the afternoon of the accident. Campus pastor Bob Yoder, close friends and members of Martin's extended family were with him at the hospital as he underwent surgery. Though freight trains pass through the middle of the campus multiple times each day, the college doesn't have record of a train ever hitting a student on campus. The college has policies for ensuring the safety of students and, in particular, keeping them safe around the trains.—*Goshen College*

MMA award to New Community Project

GOSHEN, Ind.—Tom Benevento, with his New Community Project (NCP) partners in Harrisonburg, Va., received Mennonite Mutual Aid's Journey Award Nov. 15, 2009, at Shalom Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

This is the ninth year MMA has presented a Journey Award to highlight what people of faith are doing as stewards of their God-given gifts.

Benevento, New Community's coordinator, leads its local work in caring for creation and bringing justice to people without financial means. NCP works in urban agriculture, including gardening projects with Our Community Place, a community-centered project, for people who are homeless. NCP is also working on transportation locally, including an environmentally friendly shuttle bus and a community bicycle shop.—*MMA*

Spanish pastor recognized for social action

STRAUSBOURG, France—José Luis Suárez has been named the first individual recipient of the Diaconia Award to recognize outstanding work in evangelical social action. Since 1984, Suárez has been pastor of the Barcelona Evangelical Mennonite Church in Spain.

The Federation of Evangelical Churches in Spain has begun a new annual Diakonia Award in two categories: institutional career and personal career. Asociación Betel (Bethel Association) has received the first institutional award.

Suárez is well-known in the field of peace, recognized by the UNESCO-Cataluña. He has coordinated and encouraged evangelical social action in churches and organizations in Cataluña in his role as president of the Catalan Diaconia from 1997 to 2006. He is the head of social work at Catalunya Consell Evangélic and a member of the executive committee of the organization.

Suárez was president of the national conference, Asociación de Menonitas y Hermanos en Cristo en España, from 1990 to 2008 and the church's representative to MERK (European Mennonite Regional Conference). The national church is a Mennonite World Conference associate member.—*MWC*

Photo provided

Young adults prepare for mission in Indonesia

The Indonesia World Missions Institute group prays over the foggy valley where headhunters had killed previous missionaries to the region. Over 60 Indonesian, Chinese and North American young adults trained for missions together in a WMI in Indonesia, Nov. 9-12, 2009. Eastern Mennonite Missions helped organize the institute.—*EMM*

Rejoice! offered online

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—For many Mennonite Church USA members, the kitchen table and *Rejoice!*, the daily devotional from Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), go together.

But an experiment conducted over the past two years shows that a growing number of people are doing their devotions online.

"When we put the daily meditations from *Rejoice!* online, we didn't know how many people would use it," says Eleanor Snyder, who directs the Faith and Life Resources imprint for MPN. "We were pleasantly surprised by the results."

Site statistics show that the meditations, which were made available for free on the Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada Web sites, were being viewed about 6,000 times a month this past fall. Circulation of the paper version is about 13,000. To serve this growing demand, MPN has decided to offer the full version of the devotional online for $4.99 per quarter, a savings of $2.16 over the paper version.

The full version includes the meditations, prayer requests and other inspirational stories and poems. The printed version will continue to be offered. For more information, or to order *Rejoice!* online, go to www.mpn.net/rejoice.—*MPN*

Zero waste: a movement to avoid dumping trash in landfills

At Yellowstone National Park, the clear soda cups and white utensils are not your typical cafe-counter garbage. Made of plant-based plastics, they dissolve magically when heated for more than a few minutes.

At Ecco, a restaurant in Atlanta, waiters no longer scrape food scraps into the trash bin. Uneaten morsels are dumped into five-gallon pails and taken to a compost heap out back.

And at eight of its North American plants, Honda is recycling so diligently that the factories have gotten rid of their trash Dumpsters altogether.

An antigarbage strategy known as "zero waste" is moving from the fringes to the mainstream, taking hold in school cafeterias, national parks, restaurants, stadiums and corporations.

The movement is simple in concept if not always in execution: Produce less waste. Shun polystyrene foam containers or any other packaging that is not biodegradable. Recycle or compost whatever you can.

Though born of idealism, the zero-waste philosophy is now propelled by sobering realities, like the growing difficulty of securing permits for new landfills and an awareness that organic decay in landfills releases methane that helps warm the earth's atmosphere.

"Nobody wants a landfill sited anywhere near them, including in rural areas," says Jon D. Johnston, a materials management branch chief for the Environmental Protection Agency who is helping lead the zero-waste movement in the Southeast. "We've come to this realization that landfill is valuable and we can't bury things that don't need to be buried."

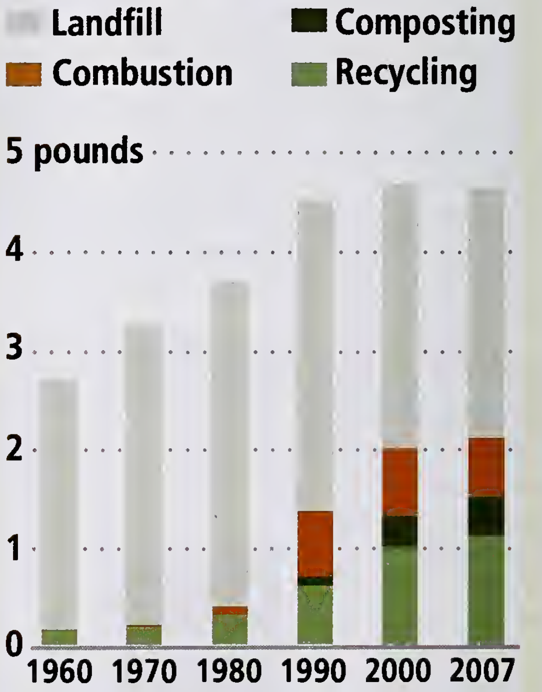
Americans are still the undisputed champions of trash, dumping 4.6 pounds per person per day, according to the E.P.A.'s most recent figures. More than half ends up in landfills or is incinerated.

But places like the island resort community of Nantucket offer a glimpse of the future. Running out of landfill space and worried about the cost of shipping trash 30 miles to the mainland, it moved to a strict trash policy more than a decade ago, says Jeffrey Willett, director of public works on the island.

The town, with the blessing of residents concerned about tax increases, mandates the recycling not only of commonly reprocessed items like aluminum, glass and paper but also of tires, batteries and household appliances.

Food waste, which the E.P.A. says accounts for about 13 percent of total trash, is viewed as the next big frontier. —*The New York Times*

Disposal of municipal solid waste per person per day



Source: Environmental Protection Agency

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann

HEY, GOD, IN THE COMING YEAR, SHOULD I ERR ON THE SIDE OF BEING TOO COMPASSIONATE AND RISK ALLOWING SIN TO GO UNCHECKED...
RESOLU-TIONS
... OR BEING TOO JUDGMENTAL AND RISK LOSING THE CHANCE TO REDEEM THOSE WHO STRUGGLE?
TELL YOU WHAT-- YOU DECIDE, THEN I'LL USE THE SAME SYSTEM ON YOU!
GULP!

—compiled by Gordon Houser

> “We worship the economy. It has its own dogma, its own precepts, and its core theology is selfish individualism.”
>
> *—Elizabeth May, leader of Canada's Green Party and an aspiring Anglican priest*

Perchance to dream

In a paper published last October in the journal *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, Dr. J. Allan Hobson, a psychiatrist and longtime sleep researcher at Harvard, argues that the main function of rapid-eye-movement sleep, or REM, when most dreaming occurs, is physiological. The brain is warming its circuits, anticipating the sights and sounds and emotions of waking.

“It helps explain a lot of things, like why people forget so many dreams,” Dr. Hobson said in an interview. “It's like jogging; the body doesn't remember every step, but it knows it has exercised. It has been tuned up. It's the same idea here: dreams are tuning the mind for conscious awareness.”

Drawing on work of his own and others, Dr. Hobson argues that dreaming is a parallel state of consciousness that is continually running but normally suppressed during waking. The idea is a prominent example of how neuroscience is altering assumptions about everyday (or every-night) brain functions.—*The New York Times*

What is old?

The average age Americans under 30 say old age begins: **60**
The average age Americans **65** and older say old age begins: **74**
The average age Americans say they want to live: **89**
—Yes! Magazine

Lutherans make big cuts

Even while anticipating that the current U.S. recession would make it difficult to meet a $76 million budget approved for 2010, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) suddenly needed to make an additional 10 percent reduction in the budget as a result of a delegate action last summer.

“Some congregations have decided to withhold funds to register their disagreement with the actions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly,” said a Nov. 13, 2009, ELCA release. “The assembly, which met Aug. 17-23, 2009, in Minneapolis, adopted proposals to change ELCA ministry policies. One change makes it possible for Lutherans in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same-gender relationships to serve as ELCA associates in ministry, clergy, deaconesses and diaconal ministers.”

During the Nov. 14-15, 2009, weekend, 40 staff members' positions were terminated. Some of the people had been with the ELCA since it was founded in 1988. ELCA's headquarters are in Chicago.
—Everett Thomas

The power of prayer

It's been 20 years since the Berlin Wall came down, an event caused partly by the protest movement spawned in East German churches, according to an article in Wilson Quarterly (Autumn 2009). St. Nicholas Church in Leipzig, where prayers were held every Monday, was the center of the movement. A month before the wall came down, 70,000 people showed up at St. Nicholas for Monday prayers. They paraded through the streets in peaceful protest, carrying candles and chanting, “We are the people.” A pastor from East Berlin says that no outside force could have liberated East Germany. “What happened was self-liberation,” he says.—*The Christian Century*

8 facts about sanitation

1. 2.5 billion people worldwide are without access to proper sanitation, which risks their health, strips their dignity, and kills 1.8 million people, mostly children, a year.

2. Diarrheal diseases kill five times as many children in the developing world as HIV/AIDS.

3. That's 5,000 children dying every day.

4. Not only that, but the disease kills more children than either malaria or AIDS, stunts growth and forces millions—adults and children alike—to spend weeks at a time off work or school, which hits both a country's economy and its citizens' chances of a better future.

5. The majority of the illness in the world is caused by fecal matter.

6. Lack of sanitation is the world's biggest cause of infection.

7. One gram of feces can contain 10 million viruses, one million bacteria, 1,000 parasite cysts and 100 parasite eggs.

8. Safe disposal of children's feces leads to a reduction of nearly 40 percent in childhood diarrhea.—*worldtoiletday.com*

Ervin Stutzman, the new executive director of Mennonite Church USA, has been a hobby woodworker for most of his adult life. He learned early on that a tool is only as useful as the person who wields it.

Stutzman brings many tools with him to his new position as executive director, a position he begins this month. As a child growing up in a Beachy Amish community in rural Kansas, he developed some of his most useful tools early on.

Our new executive director

by Laura Lehman Amstutz

Introducing Ervin Stutzman, the new executive director of Mennonite Church USA

Stutzman chronicles much of his childhood in two recent books, *Tobias of the Amish* and *Emma, Widow of the Amish.* He and his twin, Erma, are the youngest of six children. Their father died when the twins were 3. Afterward, his mother moved the family from Kalona, Iowa, to Hutchinson, Kan., where her family lived.

"I don't think I realized at the time that most of our congregation was made up of people who were at least distantly related to me," says Stutzman. "Our relatives surrounded my mother and cared for her after my father died.

"At that time, the Amish Mennonite Church had many people who had returned from I-W service after World War II. The leaders of the congregation had seen the world in ways their parents had not.

"That congregation had a sense of mission in the world and it encouraged young leaders. Lots of church leaders have come from the congregation," says Stutzman. "It gave me a place to grow."

Stutzman had many opportunities to exercise leadership early in his life. At 22, he and his wife, Bonita (Haldeman) Stutzman, were leading a voluntary service house in Cincinnati. He was also co-pastor of Mennonite Christian Assembly in Cincinnati.

"I have always been given a lot of responsibility for my age," says Stutzman. "I have been preaching regularly since the age of 22."

At 29, he and Bonnie and their young family moved to Lancaster, Pa., where he was associate pastor at Mount Joy Mennonite Church. After only 18 months he was asked to be the bishop of the Landisville District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

"I was the next to youngest pastor in the district and was asked to give oversight to people twice my age. I got practice really fast with how to work with people," says Stutzman. "This seems to be a pattern in my life. When I come into new situations, I get handed responsibility."

The responsibility he was given early on spurred him to find a way to help other congregations mentor and encourage young adults in ministry. While serving as dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., Stutzman wrote part of a grant for a Culture of Call program that encouraged young adults to consider ministry and prodded congregations to provide mentoring experiences for young people.

Stutzman's early years at Center Amish Mennonite Church and the community in Hutchinson, Kan., also gave him a basis for faith and practice.

"The community I grew up in was a community whose faith was central to who they were," says Stutzman. "We tried to be nonconformed to the world, and the reason for that was always that we were set apart for God. It is a normal thing for me to think I don't always do things the way other people do them. I never grew up thinking that doing it like everyone else was the best way to please God."

He learned that simplicity is opposite the American dream. For him, this emphasis on nonconformity translates to a call to discipleship.

"I love the Mennonite church because it has people who have taken the gospel seriously and have been involved in mission and service in the world," says Stutzman. "But I'm afraid we ▶

It is a normal thing for me to think I don't always do things the way other people do them.—Ervin Stutzman

Jon Styer

Ervin Stutzman teaching at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

are not aware enough of our history. There is inspiration we can draw from it.

"I intend to lead the church, not as a business or a political entity, although it is both of those, but first and foremost as a faith community," he says. "We are God's community. We need to ask how God is speaking to us."

Stutzman hopes to revive the value of reading Scripture together.

"We have a communal hermeneutic, a way we gather around the Scripture as a community and study it together. In many ways that is our primary business as a church.

"I also feel that in our discipleship, in both the most conservative wing of the church and the most liberal, we place too much emphasis on what we can do that pleases God and not enough emphasis on receiving God's grace. I know that is an element of faith I struggle with, and I see it in others, too."

We would be a much stronger church if we recognized the strengths that our diversity brings us instead of getting caught up in our differences.—Ervin Stutzman

Stutzman describes himself as a lifelong learner. As a child, he read all kinds of books and had what he described as a good basic education. He participated in spelling and speech contests as an elementary and high school student, although he admits he never won any of these contests.

During voluntary service in Cincinnati, he got special permission to work on his college degree while he was supervising his voluntary service house.

"This got me in the habit of doing two things at once for the rest of my life. I learned to juggle and integrate," he says.

"I find learning a new skill more exciting then entertainment," says Stutzman. "As a young couple, Bonnie and I spent money on tools for working with our hands instead of going out to eat or any other kind of entertainment."

Ervin and Bonnie passed their love of learning to their three children—Emma, Daniel and Benjamin, now adults.

"Our whole family got into thinking about things together," he says. "We would discuss topics or books together. For our family, learning is one of the most exciting things you can do in life. We have never had the sense that learning is something you do because it's required or someone else wants you to. You do it because you enjoy it."

Stutzman translated his love of learning into a love of teaching. As a seminary professor and dean, he enjoys teaching someone something they really need at the moment.

"I call this 'just in time' learning, when someone can immediately benefit from something they've learned. That's why I enjoy teaching preaching, because it is something pastors often feel they need.

"I am most discouraged when I feel people don't want to learn," he says. "Continuing to do something in the same old way isn't interesting to me."

Learning from others is one of the tools Stutzman brings with him to his work with Mennonite Church USA.

"My experience as moderator for the Executive Board at the time of the merger has really shaped me. I enjoy working with people from diverse backgrounds, and we have much to learn from each other," he says. "We would be a much stronger church if we recognized the strengths that our diversity brings us instead of getting caught up in our differences."

Stutzman has spent several years learning Spanish as one way of communicating to parts of Mennonite Church USA. He spent part of a sabbatical one summer at SEMILLA, the Anabaptist seminary in Guatemala, as a way to practice his Spanish. As dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, he worked with a Spanish-speaking conversation partner as part of the Intentional English Program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Stutzman is also intentional about his spirituality.

"I talk with God every day," says Stutzman. "There is not a day that goes by that I don't have a sense of what God might want me to do that day."

"I desire that personal sense of God's will enlarged for the whole church," he says. "When we come to God together and listen, God speaks to us."

Stutzman also lives his life with purpose, based on a personal purpose statement he wrote several years ago:

In response to God's love expressed in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I purpose to follow after God with all my heart and serve as a faithful steward of all the resources he has generously entrusted to me, so that God may be glorified in my life at all times and in every way. Since God has called me to be a leader in the church, I shall give priority to the cultivation of a meaningful personal walk with God, the proclamation and demonstration of the kingdom of God and the equipping of faithful men and women for ministry.

"What I'm doing as executive director is not in discontinuity with anything I've done before," says Stutzman. "The role of visioning, working with people to develop their strengths, helping an organization achieve its mission as a Christian community—these are all things I've done before. Only now it's a bigger task."

"This role feels like it's a good fit for me," he says. "And it will be another one in the stream of difficult jobs that others say they would never want to have," he jokes. "But I rarely think about how much work something is going to be. That's just not the way I think. I focus on what good things might come out of it when God is in it."

Laura Lehman Amstutz is the communication coordinator for Eastern Mennonite Seminary, writing on behalf of Mennonite Church USA, and attends The Table Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

Jon Styer

Ervin Stutzman in his workshop

Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

Mutual impact

by Renee Hochstetler

Every other Friday the 10 students at the Peace & Justice Academy in Pasadena, Calif., step out of the classroom and into the community for Field Friday. When their destination is close, they travel on foot; when it's farther away, they take public transportation in order to be engaged with the city rather than removed from it.

The Peace & Justice Academy, which opened its doors last fall, serves students in grades 6-9 (planning to grow into a grades 6-12 school). It is located in the Pasadena Church of the Brethren in a neighborhood that has a large Armenian population.

A Freeman (S.D.) Academy student rakes leaves during a community service day.

Students engage, learn from community involvement

Kimberly Williams, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, often leads Field Friday activities, which tie closely into course curriculum. For example, in the classroom setting, students learn how to compare and contrast two experiences and write about them. Then they use this skill to write about their Field Friday experiences. This fall, teachers focused on comparing cultures and socioeconomic classes.

The Field Friday that explored culture began in the neighborhood, visiting an Armenian bakery. As the students sampled baked goods, they observed the similarities and differences between their own cultures and those new to them; one striking difference for everyone was an Arabic newspaper that opened "backward."

Next on the agenda was a 30-minute drive to downtown Los Angeles for a scavenger hunt in Chinatown. Their to-do list included tasks like asking a person where they were from, finding unfamiliar items in a grocery store and locating a specific item in a bakery. The day ended with an Ethiopian meal at which students, following Ethiopian custom, ate with their hands.

Before the Field Friday that explored socioeconomic classes, students prepared for the day by learning about the socioeconomic-ethnic composition of today's world. To better convey the statistics in the world's distribution of wealth, the group formed a microcosm—a theoretical village—in which each student represented 10 people. The students soon discovered the realities they each represented.

The Field Friday that explored socioeconomic class included a scavenger hunt as well. On Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, the kids were challenged to find the most expensive item they could. Their finds included a $179,000 ring and a $1.4 million art piece.

Leaving the opulence of Rodeo Drive, the group drove down Wilshire Boulevard for lunch in Grand Central Market downtown. Along the way the group observed the changes from one neighborhood to the next, noting socioeconomic indicators such as jobs and transportation.

When they arrived at the market, each student randomly received an envelope with lunch money, the amount corresponding to the wealth represented in their theoretical village. One student had $10 and another $5, but most received only $2. The staff challenged each student to purchase what they could afford and return to the group to eat. According to Kimberly Medendorp, co-director and teacher at the academy, the theoretical village provided a wonderful learning experience. Even though some students were initially upset that they received so little, they came to understand what the disparity indicated—a small percentage of the world's population holds a significant percentage of its wealth.

Neither the day nor the lesson was over. Following lunch the group went to Skid Row, an area of Los Angeles that contains one of the largest populations of homeless people in the United States, to meet with an organization that runs after-school programs for homeless children.

All the member schools of Mennonite Schools Council provide their students with opportunities to serve others in their community.

"What struck the students most," Medendorp says, "was that the people they saw coming in the doors were kids just like them. Instead of returning home after the program, though, these kids would return to a cramped motel room, a shelter or the street."

How does a student respond to the fact that the average age of a homeless person in the United States is 9? Encountering such drastic disparities can weigh heavily on adults, let alone children, so the Peace & Justice Academy debriefs after each Field Friday and requires each student to keep a journal to reflect on thoughts and feelings. To encourage action on what they experience about class distinctions, students do a service project at a family shelter at Christmastime.

The value the school places on students interacting with their community influenced the development of family-friendly policies. The academy follows a late-start schedule; classes start at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. to provide their adolescent students more sleep so that they are

Students at Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va., serve the community.

No matter the form it takes, the emphasis is that service is part of following Christ.

more ready to fully engage in their studies. A no-homework policy enables the students to spend more time with their families and plug into church and other activities away from school. Instead of homework, a block of time at the end of the day is designated for students to do their assignments with teachers present.

The Peace & Justice Academy is not alone in its commitment to integrate community involvement with learning. All the member schools of Mennonite Schools Council provide their students with opportunities to serve others in their community—either as schoolwide events or as part of the curriculum. The type of service opportunities are determined by whether their local community is urban, rural or suburban. No matter the form it takes, the emphasis is that service is part of following Christ.

Eastern Mennonite School (EMS), a kindergarten through grade 12 school in Harrisonburg, Va., offers students in all grades a variety of ways to engage their faith through community interaction. With more than 350 students at EMS, involvement takes many forms.

This year, students in the National Honor Society at Eastern Mennonite High School accepted the challenge to coordinate schoolwide community service projects. According to the school's principal, Paul Leaman, the challenge has already spawned a variety of service projects for students this fall. Some have prepared relief kits for Mennonite Central Committee, worked at Patchwork Pantry, a food distribution center, helped children with art projects as part of an initiative at Barnes and Noble and assisted a local dance and acting club by transporting their Nutcracker set for Christmas performances. The aim of each project is to develop leadership skills in the National Honor Society students and service opportunities for the student body.

The high school curriculum includes formalized experiential learning in a one-week session called E-term. Participating students connect with the Harrisonburg community in activities such as spreading mulch and cleaning for those who need help. High school students also spend a Community Service Day each spring helping local community organizations prepare for summer camps, clean up trash and provide other much-needed help.

Middle school students at EMS are also involved. The sixth grade students worked with Tom Benevento and others at Our Community Place—a local nonprofit organization that promotes care for the planet, empowers marginalized and impoverished people, and builds a foundation for nonviolent response. One of the organization's many projects is the Muddy Bike Urban Garden Project, which grows organic vegetables for local markets. The garden project uses no fossil fuels; all gardening is done with hand tools, and deliveries are made on bicycles. While gardening, students learned about sustainable living practices such as solar power and water catchment. "The students have been so enthusiastic, and they've contributed greatly," says Benevento. "They really engaged with the people they worked with."

Patsy Seitz teaches English and Bible at the middle school and is in charge of activities for this school year. While there are formal service opportunities like the garden project, she says, there are also informal ways that service happens, such as reading to the elementary school's students. In her classroom, Seitz encourages sensitivity to others, personal initiative and community involvement. "It's important for the students to connect with community programs and go beyond themselves," she says. "It taps into some important resources and gives them a vision for who and what they might become as they age."

Maria Archer, the principal at Eastern Mennonite Elementary School, says every student has a role to play. "We are a part of this community," she says, "and we want to give back as much as we can. Even at our students' ages, we want to show them that they can be involved with the community."

Elementary school students read to the 3- and 4-year-old children who attend Roberta Webb Child Care Center, a local preschool located at Immanuel Mennonite Church. Before traveling to the church this fall, the fourth and fifth graders baked cookies for the preschoolers. Preschool director Kathryn Morris says it was a positive interaction once the students read one-on-one. She was pleased to see that a few of the elementary school students had attended the preschool, making the connection between those who serve and those being served even more significant.

Community involvement is part of the Freeman (S.D.) Academy tradition, too. Each year the school earmarks two days for schoolwide service projects: one to rake leaves and another to can meat for Mennonite Central Committee.

For the Freeman community, this kind of assistance is much appreciated. Ardella Gross, a resident of Freeman who is no longer able to rake her leaves, asks students to come during the fall service day. "It's so good when the students come," she says. "They have so much energy." That energy is needed because they haul the leaves away, too, filling grain wagons and emptying them at the town's compost facility. There have been some years, she says, when she has joined the group in a student-led devotion after they finished working.

Students at the Peace & Justice Academy in Pasadena, Calif.

A graduate of Freeman Academy herself, Gross recounts her time at the academy and its legacy of service. For a fund-raiser, she says, she and her classmates picked corn and sold it to the local grain elevator. Without today's combines, the students had to work hard to shell the corn.

The annual canning event has been a Freeman tradition for at least 40 years. Volunteers can 16,000 pounds of turkey in two days. Classes from Freeman Academy come in shifts and work alongside community volunteers.

In addition to these annual opportunities to serve the community, many teachers at Freeman integrate the concept of service into their classroom teaching, from picking up trash to hosting guest speakers. Many Mennonite Schools Council teachers see the value of service as a way to help students socially, emotionally and spiritually.

Talk with any student, teacher or community member, and it will soon be apparent that a symbiotic relationship exists between schools and their communities. As often happens during shared projects, the connections between the school and the local community leave an impression on everyone involved and in many cases open doors for future opportunities.

The Peace & Justice Academy, EMS and Freeman Academy share a vision for education where God's love is the most powerful force in the universe, and in response to God's love we are called to live out the teachings of Jesus in daily life.

Renee Hochstetler is a member of Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind.

Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

Far from home

Students learn about themselves in cross-cultural settings.

Cross-cultural experiences are integrated into the curriculum of Mennonite higher education institutions. While the location and itinerary vary, over and over again the experience is life-changing, transforming how students see themselves and the world around them.

The following are seven stories that illustrate the significant impact the experience can have on a student's life.

SunJu Moon, student, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

"I want to experience ministry as a missionary, learning to work with another culture and another language," SunJu Moon says.

SunJu and DongJu Park, her husband, and their daughters came to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., from Korea two years ago for her master of divinity degree. This year she is completing a required internship with Hively Avenue Mennonite Church in Elkhart, where she and her family have been worshiping.

"I want not only to have the congregation learn from me, but I want to learn from them, too," SunJu says. She hopes she can bring her understandings of spirituality to the congregation, using her experiences from Korea. At the same time, she wants to apply what she learns from the congregation's members to her own spiritual journey.

Another goal SunJu has is to learn more about peacemaking. "I want to learn how to practice peace in my personal life and in the community," she says, then consider how the ways the Hively congregation is involved in peace and justice might be applicable in Korea.

Most of all, though, SunJu says, "I want to be friends." She is meeting with members of the congregation individually to get to know them better and to break down stereotypes she says she may have of North Americans.

SunJu expects to complete her AMBS studies in 2011 and then will see where God is calling her. "Maybe I will go to another country as a missionary. I will be bringing my experience to them and humbly learn from their experience, too."—*Mary Klassen, director of communications, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary* •

Peter Ringenberg

Learning together: SunJu Moon (center) sings a hymn with others at the opening worship service of this school year at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. DongJu Park, her husband, is on her right.

Bradley McKellip, Bethel College student

Bradley McKellip, a Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) senior from Newton, Kan., readily admits he "hadn't even heard of pacifism until high school." Nonetheless, he chose to go to the local college, knowing full well it identified with a tradition of Christian peacemaking. As a Bethel student, Brad took advantage of an opportunity to study for a semester in Northern Ireland in the fall of 2008.

"I didn't have the upbringing to instill nonviolence as an integral part of my identity," he wrote in a speech he submitted for Bethel's C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest last spring. "It took three months of walking through the tired stone streets of war-battered Derry, Northern Ireland, to do that."

A pivotal event happened when his fellow university students chose a club to celebrate his birthday.

"The specific club they chose, unbeknownst to me, was key … because some other Irish friends of mine informed me that they would not be joining us for the festivities because, much as they loved all that nightclubs had to offer, the particular club we were going to be attending was a 'Protestant' club. In other words, [good Irish Catholic] kids named O'Donnell do about as well in 'the Protestant game' as kids named McKellip do in 'the Mennonite game.' Only instead of ending in hymn-sings, these conflicts end with fists. Or bats. Or hunger strikes. Or guns. Or bombs.

"In that moment, I realized just how much I did not want this seed of violence to be cultivated in me: in the words I speak, in the papers I write, in the way I love those closest to me.

"Of course, [campus] divisions are not even remotely close in terms of magnitude to the horrors that have happened in Ireland. They are, however, of the same nature. And the solution, not unlike my own epiphany, is not grandiose. [It] must come from me and my fellow students, recognizing and searching for the things we share, as well as the strengths we have to offer each other." *—Melanie Zuercher, writer and editor, Bethel College*

Photo provided

Overcoming the seed of violence: Brad McKellip in Dublin in the fall of 2008

Anna Yoder, 2009 Bluffton University graduate

Here are a few moments that made lasting impressions on me during my trip to Israel/Palestine: sitting on the roof of the Ecce Homo in Old Jerusalem while the Dome of the Rock glistened in the moonlight, floating in the Dead Sea, immersed into the culture, grace and hospitality of my Palestinian host family, lolling on the shore of Sea of Galilee, singing hymns in ancient churches and talking to different peace organizations that daily refuse to give up hope amid the realities of the conflict. I was also blessed to travel with such a remarkable group of students and faculty. Together we struggled with tough issues, served, laughed, played and praised God together.

To sum up my entire cross-cultural experience during May 2008 is a challenge. So much of it was life altering, not only in terms of my faith but also my worldview. Mere words cannot do it justice. One must go and see the pain, suffering and joy of the people living in a world ridden with violence and conflict in order to truly understand how spending a mere two and a half weeks in Israel/Palestine invited me out of my limited American perspective and comfort zone and enlarged the realities of Christ in my life.

Bluffton (Ohio) University has given me a taste of the world larger than myself. As I left Israeli-Palestinian soil, I came away changed, with a heart for social justice, a greater appreciation for the church and a conviction that peace is only found through the gospel of Jesus. I carry these learnings with me daily. I have no doubt this experience will continue to shape my vocation and faith for the rest of my life.*—Anna Yoder, serving with Radical Journey in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa*

Photo provided

Altering one's faith and worldview: Anna Yoder in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Tim Moyer, 2008 graduate, Eastern Mennonite Seminary

"I grew up believing the American dream—that if you worked hard and saved, you could get ahead," says Tim Moyer. And for Moyer that dream has come true; he owns an auto body and mechanical repair shop in Harleysville, Pa.

"But after I visited Haiti for my cross-cultural experience at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (Harrisonburg, Va.), I have come to question that dream," he says.

Moyer's self-designed cross-cultural trip was a requirement for his master of divinity degree. "I balked at the idea of a cross-cultural trip," he says. "I didn't like the imposition, but once I got back I realized the vast value of it."

"One of the most profound experiences for me came after I returned," he says. "I woke up in my warm bed, took a warm shower, traveled on well-maintained roads and arrived at my climate-controlled church and sang some of the same songs we sang in Haiti.

"When we sing 'Showers of Blessings,' it means something totally different than it does in Haiti," he says. "The poverty there is profound, yet they sing that song with great joy. Christianity is such a huge part of their lives."

Moyer's main goal was to engage with Haitians and learn about their lives. He spent time at the mission school in Labaleine, Haiti, eating with the children and spending time in the classroom. He also visited with as many people as possible. He ate in their homes, talked to them about their own small businesses and went to four church services.

"Cross-cultural experience, if it's done well, can deepen a person's capacity to minister. It gives them a broader base to view and interpret life."—*Laura Lehman Amstutz, communications coordinator, Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Karen Moyer

Deepening one's capacity to minister: Tim Moyer with children in Haiti

Mennonite Education
changed my LIFE!

Katie Rodriguez

So much passion in worship services: Curtis Reesor (left) in Lesotho

Curtis Reesor, Eastern Mennonite University

Curtis Reesor, a senior business administration and accounting major from Stouffville, Ontario, was one of 24 Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.) students who spent the fall 2009 semester on a cross-cultural trip in South Africa and Lesotho.

Our first church experience in Lesotho was probably the most memorable. We sat through 90 minutes of a four-hour service. We walked through town to the outskirts of the village to a small rectangular hut on the side of the mountain. All 24 students and our leaders piled into a room with 10-15 congregational members. A small candle burned in the middle of the floor while we all lined up against the walls. We clapped along with the lively music of the congregation while someone beat a drum as four people ran around the candle in the middle of the room singing and clapping, raising their arms in the air praising and worshiping the Lord. Several of us were coaxed into the middle of the floor to run about and clap with the members.

The pastor delivered a kind and passionate message in Sesotho while [our leader] translated the key points for us. He then asked us if two or three people would step forward and share their testimonies. Everyone was interested in knowing about us and why we had come to their small, primitive village for two and a half weeks and what we thought of them and their country. When each testimony had finished, everyone smiled and clapped. We sang some of our songs for them, then entered prayer time.

Churches like this believe that through worship, prayer, singing and dancing we can open up our souls to be cleansed by God. There is so much passion in the services in Lesotho, and everyone feels free to do whatever it takes to rid themselves of stresses and burdens. I left that day feeling refreshed by the passion and love of the people of Lesotho and felt closer to God.
—*Curtis Reesor*

Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

Lydie Assefa, 2009 Goshen College graduate

While participating in Goshen (Ind.) College's Study-Service Term in Tanzania and during the first week of our service assignment, fellow student Laura and I decided to go for a run through the tiny village of Buturi. A student at the local high school and our cultural guide, John, also came along with us for the exercise.

About 20 minutes later and miles away from home, a thunderstorm quickly materialized. John suggested that we simply walk into a neighboring house and wait out the storm. Once inside, we met a group of older women sitting around, drinking tea and talking. Upon seeing us, they immediately ushered us inside and provided us with chai tea and chapati (fried bread) and engaged us in delightful conversation. The women were warm and friendly and invited us for dinner the next day. Even in the middle of a thunderstorm, there was much cheerfulness and warmth between strangers.

Later, Laura and I experienced the tragic death of her 15-year-old host brother. In the days and weeks following his death, Laura's house was constantly visited by neighbors, school friends and relatives to mourn with the family. Neighbor women, distant relatives and friends volunteered to manage meals for the large number of visitors, and a collection plate circulated for the family to buy a cow to feed everyone.

However, in the flurry of mourning and making necessary preparations, Laura's host grandmother stepped out of her own grief to ensure that we, as visitors from abroad, were properly fed, not overly exhausted by the activity and able to sleep well. Her mindfulness and concern in the midst of the crisis was a humbling statement of hospitality and compassion that moved me to tears.

My experience in Tanzania acquainted me with what is important in the everyday lives of people thousands of miles away and helped me better embrace my responsibilities as a global citizen.—*Lydie Assefa, spending the year in Ethiopia with Mennonite Central Committee's SALT program*

Peter Shetler

Remarkable hospitality: Lydie Assefa with her Study-Service Term host family in Tanzania

Kendra Alison, Hesston College student

Growing up in the house I did, I have been able to meet many people from different places, and it has fascinated me to see everyone coming and going and hear their life stories. My parents opened up our house for anyone and everyone, so I got to meet a variety of people. I always wanted to be like them and travel the world and see exciting new places.

I decided to come to Hesston (Kan.) College because I knew they had a large international student population, and I wanted to experience all that the world had to offer me. I decided to room with an international student, and that experience alone taught me more about the world than I even realized it would. I got to see the world from someone else's perspective, and that made me understand my own a little better.

This past summer, I traveled to Guatemala and I got to experience what it was like being the one who was different in a foreign land. I now understand why it is so hard for people to come here and try to fit in. Experiencing a new culture is difficult not only because there is a language barrier but because daily customs are different.

I think the cross-cultural experience is one everybody should have because we get out of our trap of being with people who are like-minded, living lives similar to ours. The intentional community of being with people who are different teaches us how to relate to one another in a new way, and that is such a reward. Being open to change allows us to live out our Christian faith, and that is what life is all about.—*Kendra Alison*

Larry Bartel

Seeing the world from someone else's perspective: Kendra Alison (left) and her roommate, Reshet Gebremariam from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mennonite Education
changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

5 Reasons for Mennonite education

by Rachel Nussbaum Eby

Students, parents and alumni sometimes are challenged for choosing a Mennonite educational institution (of any level). What makes education there better than the education offered by a public institution? It's a faith-integrated education from an Anabaptist perspective.

1. The whole person

Those who work in Mennonite education want to help students in all aspects of learning: academically, spiritually, socially, physically and emotionally. Students and former students often mention how they have felt accepted and loved for who they are. At the same time, they have been provided a strong academic education and challenged to reach their God-given potential.

2. Spiritual life

Mennonite education partners with families and the church to nurture the spiritual life of students. Spirituality is part of the day-to-day educational experience, allowing students to "soak in" Scripture through Scripture memorization, Bible classes and chapels. Biblical teaching is not only reserved for those times but also is integrated into the entire curriculum. For example, history taught from an Anabaptist perspective values all human life and everyone's history—regardless of race, socioeconomic status or nationality.

3. Role models of faith

Not only are biblical truths taught, they are also modeled by faculty and staff. Students learn through daily observation how one's personal faith can affect one's life. Formal and informal mentoring provide moments when faith stories are shared and connections are made. The genuine care of a community, beyond a student's circle of family and church, expands what it means to be a follower of Christ.

4. Community

Community at Mennonite educational institutions goes beyond a group of positive role models. The community's culture is based on grace, trust, love, acceptance and accountability. In these safe, nurturing environments, students, faculty and staff form relationships that last a lifetime. Cooperation is emphasized over competition. Rules and discipline based in love and care, not power. Students experience God's love in new ways as they participate in these Mennonite educational communities.

5. Service to others

Learning to live faithfully in a community of faith is only the beginning. Mennonite educational institutions emphasize, in contrast to secular thinking, that one's life is not for self but for service to others. Whatever one's future career, one can serve. Students have many opportunities to learn about service—on campus, in the local community, nationally and overseas—to lead students to a lifetime of service and witness.

Mennonite education is chosen time and again due to the fact that the whole experience is greater than the sum of all the reasons that can be listed.

5 Ways to help Mennonite education

by Rachel Nussbaum Eby

Mennonite educational institutions play an important role in the life of the church and the world beyond. Do you ever doubt your ability to have an impact on the world for good? This could also be true for having an impact on Mennonite education. Many want to help Mennonite education but wonder if anything one person does makes much of a difference. The following are five of many ways you can help Mennonite education:

1. Learn

Whether you know a little or a lot about Mennonite education, it's good to learn more. Talk to students or alumni about their experiences and how these changed their lives. Read articles in print and online. Or focus on one institution—not necessarily located near you. Call to talk with someone about what is exciting and challenging for the institution, subscribe to its publications or news service and explore its Web site. Consider a personal visit to give you an even better glimpse.

2. Advocate

Advocate for Mennonite educational institutions by talking about them with your family and your congregation. Keep the option of attending or supporting these institutions in front of people—not only potential students and parents but potential teachers and professors. Encourage your congregation to learn more by having a service about church education, a Mennonite education display or a guest speaker from the Mennonite educational community. Parents of students, students and alumni can personalize the reasons to support Mennonite education.

3. Mentor

If you have the opportunity, mentor others. Make arrangements so the church youth group can visit a Mennonite educational institution. Explore the option of Mennonite education with another person or family and connect them with alumni. If you feel comfortable doing so, walk through the process of applying to a Mennonite school or college and applying for financial aid and grants.

4. Give time

Be a prayer warrior for an individual student, specific institution or for Mennonite education in general. Donate items to schools and higher education institutions; out-of-date furniture just may be what is needed for an upcoming play or fund-raising auction. Contact a Mennonite educational institution. There may be ways you can volunteer—even from a distance.

5. Give money

The ways to give money are many. You can give through your congregation or as an individual. You can give once a year or monthly, in small or large amounts, by check or online, to one institution or split among several. If you live near a PreK-12 Mennonite school, seriously consider it as an option for your child by learning more about what the school has to offer. Encourage your children or grandchildren to attend a Mennonite higher education institution by offering regular support; even $50 a year toward tuition helps.

Rachel Nussbaum Eby is director of communications for the Mennonite Education Agency.

Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

Twists and turns

How a reluctant student became a longtime Mennonite educator

by Melanie Zuercher

Stanley Shenk devoted his working life to the Mennonite church, including several decades in Mennonite higher education. His own experiences at a Mennonite college set him on that course.

Stanley Shenk last summer

Stanley's early years showed little promise of what was to come. His mother, Icie Pearl (Shank) Shenk, died in February 1922, just a month short of her son's third birthday. Stanley's father, Coffman Shenk, was "broken emotionally by [my mother's] death and by the loss of his poultry business," Stanley says.

Relatives in the Denbigh, Va., area took care of little Stanley for a few months, before sending him to Versailles, Mo., and "my wonderful Missouri grandmother," Emma Driver Shank. He lived with her for two years before returning to his father, now remarried and working as a Fuller Brush salesman in Norfolk, Va.

For the next number of years, Stanley never settled in any one place for long. He fell in with "a Norfolk street gang—it sounds worse than it was, but it was bad enough," at the tender age of 7, which resulted in his being sent to live with a couple near Harrisonburg, Va., for a time. From age 9 to 10, he lived with his grandmother Emma again.

He then returned to the home of his father and stepmother (with stepbrothers Charles, who became a Mennonite missionary to Japan, and Martin) in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. The family attended Cottage City Mennonite Church. Stanley's stepmother, Retta, had secured a good job as a secretary to a Washington lawyer—a special boon in the midst of the Great Depression.

Almost from the time Stanley started school, his teachers dubbed him "a bright boy." He was skipped over grades twice—"stupid," he says now, "but they did it in those days." He "read ferociously," he says, especially newspapers and magazines, since he enjoyed keeping up with current national and world events.

By the time he was in high school, he "read everything in sight." However, he says, "I was not interested in school but only in my friends, most of them D.C. Catholics. I almost flunked out three years, but I always [managed to pass]."

Meanwhile, Coffman and Retta had moved back to Retta's hometown of Biglerville, Pa. Stanley didn't want to go, so he stayed with a friend's family. He decided he had had enough school and quit, going to work for a Mennonite from Hyattsville, Md.

But Stanley's family hadn't given up on their boy. One of Coffman's brothers was Deacon Jacob A. Shenk, a strong supporter of Virginia Mennonite Mission Board and Eastern Mennonite School (forerunner of Eastern Mennonite University). Jacob offered to pay his nephew's way if he would finish high school at EMS.

Stanley refused at first. But when he found he could no longer make his way financially on his own and was forced to go live with his parents in Biglerville, he reconsidered. He had fond memories of his time as a young boy living in the Shenandoah Valley. When he got to EMS, "I liked the place," he says, "and I liked the faculty. I began to study and work to make grades more like what I should have done all along."

However, he says, "I suspect I was the only student at EMS who wasn't a Christian." He was still, in his own words, something of a rebel. No one knew quite what to make of him. He became famous for his speeches and good arguments. Several fellow students tried to convert him, he says, "but I would out-argue them."

With high school finished, Stanley thought he would go to college to become a forest ranger, but he knew most schools wouldn't accept his poor overall high school record. Instead he returned to Harrisonburg and Eastern Mennonite College. He signed up for classes he would need for forestry but didn't like them. He also enrolled in four introductory courses: philosophy, sociology, psychology and music. He soon dropped his chemistry and math courses and never looked back.

Stanley and Doris Shenk

Stanley Shenk

Several significant things happened in Stanley's first few months at EMC. He read a series of articles on Christianity in the *Saturday Evening Post* by American philosopher Will Durant "that spoke to me as going to church never had." He met freshman student Doris Sell, a devout young Mennonite woman from Souderton, Pa. He had some serious conversations on becoming a Christian with several EMC professors.

God knew I needed Doris.—Stanley Shenk

He and Doris started dating, but she broke it off because she was, he says, just too conflicted about going with a man who wasn't a Christian. Sometime later, he was talking with M.T. Brackbill, an EMC science faculty member. "Maybe he thought I was just trying to get Doris back," Stanley recalls, "but I wanted answers. I put the most direct question to him: 'If you accept Christ as sin-forgiver, as Lord of life, then do you become a Christian?' I didn't know if it was a stupid question or not. I had no confidence in myself in spiritual matters.

"He said, 'Yes.' I slapped one fist into the other palm and said, 'I'll do it.' It was a big decision [to be so] spontaneous, but I meant it." A few days later, he attended a revival meeting and went forward—although he felt he had already made his commitment, he understood this as a way of making it public to the many people he knew had been praying for just this.

He and Doris began dating again, but once again she broke it off. They got back together in the fall of their sophomore year, and that spring he proposed. They were married on June 20, 1942, in the first wedding performed at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church, with Bishop John E. Lapp officiating. Their marriage lasted 62 years, until Doris's death in 2004. They had four children: Dave Shenk, Dan Shenk, Rhoda Keener and Phil Shenk. "God knew I needed Doris," Stanley says.

Stanley graduated from EMC (then a junior college) in 1943 and got his B.A. in Bible at Goshen (Ind.) College in 1944. He entered Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary that same summer but left after a few weeks in response to a desperate plea from EMC—World War II had left the school seriously short of faculty. He taught at EMC three years and ultimately earned his seminary degree from the Biblical Seminary in New York in 1949—the same year he was ordained to the ministry and moved to West Liberty, Ohio, to become pastor of South Union Mennonite Church.

At Goshen, he particularly remembers Harold S. Bender, J.C. Wenger and Paul Erb, "some of the best teachers I ever had. [At seminary in New York] some of the teachers were almost as good, but none was any better."

The Shenk family moved to Souderton in 1957 and returned to Goshen in 1965. Stanley taught Bible at Goshen College for 20 years. Several generations of students are unlikely to forget the inductive method of Bible study he taught them—first learned in New York.

Melanie Zuercher is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Celebrating Sabbath in a busy world

Sabbath is a way for God to care for us and us to honor God.

by Carole Ricketts Corey

Youth are learning from their parents, their models for living, that they must constantly be on the move, constantly doing something active.

Pastoral students at the seminary are assigned a church to work with during their second year of studies; those students meet together weekly to provide counsel, support, laughter and tears together. I greatly appreciated my group of fellow students and felt closer to them than anyone in the seminary. One of the students was Charleen Jongejan Harder, who is now a pastor with her husband in London, Ontario. As we shared different theological thoughts, experiences and challenges, we grew to listen and trust one another's counsel.

Charleen continually brought up the issue of Sabbath keeping. I heard her but initially thought it was an outdated idea that was too idealistic. But since then, I have come to a better understanding and have even become a Sabbath advocate. I owe my renewed embracement to Charleen; I greatly respect her for her impact on so many people.

I thought the idea was crazy. I was knee deep in studies, swimming in a sea of deadlines, papers, presentations and classes. Would teachers really understand, let alone appreciate, the excuse, "Oh I'm sorry, I didn't get that done because I was honoring the Sabbath. I'll get that to you tomorrow." Probably not.

But it wasn't just me that was busy; we all are. We have our jobs, in which we push ourselves and our employers push us. We work more than we probably should and resist the idea of placing boundaries around our time to protect it for rest and family. Furthermore, our work does not end at 5 p.m. People bring home their work, blurring the lines between home and office. There is a second shift of work at home for families when their daily "9-to-5" is done. Housework, managing finances, taking care of kids, and countless other domestic tasks compete for our time and drain our energy.

Single parents are at even more risk for being run ragged simply because the burden is on one party, not two. At times, I wonder how my own mother raised me. She worked an 11- to 12-hour day as an elementary school teacher and raised me as a single mother.

But now our society is guilty of extending this busyness to its children. I lament the overpacked schedule and lives of children and youth. It is wonderful when youth have extracurricular programs that promote wellness and exercise, art, music and other activities that help to make well-rounded young adults. But at what point do we push our children into booking every waking minute with teams and sports, arts and music programs, not allowing them to be kids and enjoy the comforts of home? Youth are learning from their parents, their models for living, that they must constantly be on the move, constantly doing something active.

We need Sabbath, even if we doubt we have time for it.

Add to this the problem that we are conditioned to want more and spend more. We are taught to think that the latest gadget, the latest phone, the latest fashions must be ours. It's as if our self-worth depended on these; in many cases our social self-worth depends on having the latest craze. One of the dangerous things about this marketing is that our ability to buy often is hinged upon our ability to have the money needed. Our need (whether truly our own or a product of marketing) means we must spend more and must work more and/or be in debt more. This has been heightened with the economic downturn. It is a scary time; one in which we need to pay particular attention to our spending habits.

It also can seem foolish to take a day off in this scary economic time when we feel we must work more because we must pay credit card bills, loans or mortgages, and our dollar won't go as far as it used to. I can hear the practical thought bubbles from many people: "Well, Pastor, I can't take a day off because I'm behind on my [name-any-monthly-bill-here] and my six days of work aren't covering it. So you go ahead and pray for economic change, but until then, I'm working."

This is what Dorothy Bass, author and ethicist, calls "one of the cruelest features of the American economy, which asks too much of many people [and] casts numerous others aside, leaving them without work." True Sabbath, she writes, "requires supporting underworked Americans as they wonder what Sabbath might mean for them." We need Sabbath, even if we doubt we have time for it.

God requires and commands that we take Sabbath from our weekly work. This is firmly woven into the fabric of the Old Testament and is central to Jewish life and faith even today. In the creation story, God takes a break from work on the seventh day: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation." (Genesis 2:1-3).

God rested because God felt contented with God's work and, in the wise words of the Beatles, "let it be." God rested and made the day holy; we are called to imitate God. For that reason, we honor the Sabbath.

The Lord commands God's people to respect the day, as written in the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15). In the two accounts of the Ten Commandments, there are two different reasons given. In the Exodus account, the Sabbath is tied to the creation story saying that God blessed it and consecrated it. In the Deuteronomy account, we are told to recall the Egyptian Exodus. Remember that you were once a slave, and the LORD commands you to rest.

Dorothy Bass makes a stunning summarization: "In Deuteronomy, the commandment to 'observe' the Sabbath day is tied to the experience of a people newly released from bondage. Slaves cannot take a day off; free people can. … Sabbath rest is a recurring testimony against the drudge of slavery." From these two accounts, we remember and celebrate creation and salvation. Both teach us a fundamental truth about the God we serve.

In Exodus 31, the Sabbath is so important, so revered, that those who "profane" it are to be cut off from community and sentenced to death: Say

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

Education professor leads campus focus on immigration and faith

Anabaptists have frequently been sojourners and strangers as they sought the freedom to live out God's call. Today many Anabaptists find we are more in the role of the dominant native-born culture. Meeting the needs of the stranger is at the heart of the Biblical narrative and teachings of Jesus. As followers of Christ, it is imperative that we seek to make our communities hospitable to the newcomer. In the United States, this inevitably takes us into the realms of social service and also politics. In 2003, Mennonite Church, USA declared that:

"God has called us to welcome the sojourner, and. . . we commit ourselves to action with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, [to] build relationships with newcomers in our communities, facilitate the mutual sharing of immigrants' stories and contributions in our churches and neighborhoods [and] advocate for just and humane policies for immigrants..."

So what is Bluffton University's role in this effort? Through its civic engagement theme this year "Beyond Borders: The Role of Immigration in the Global Community," Bluffton is challenging faculty, staff and students to engage immigration issues intellectually, vocationally, spiritually and structurally.

As a Christian academic community, we are asking tough questions about law, government policy, social services and education. In the Introduction to Education class, for example, students grapple with reconciling their own diverse views on immigration with the teacher's mandate to educate every child, regardless of national origin or legal status. We are experimenting with personal responses to immigration and immigrants. Bluffton´s new student group "Sin Fronteras" helps lead music in a nearby Spanish-speaking congregation. TESOL students practice teaching English to newcomers.

Bluffton is also exploring how we can respond to the needs of a changing church, including new ways of outreach to culturally diverse communities and retention of minority students. In our opening convocation, Sonia Nazario, author of *Enrique's Journey*, shared a moving challenge to the campus community to see the people behind the politics. Bluffton is committed to connecting to people in the broader church, immigrant and native-born alike.

To that end, we invite you to come to Bluffton University, March 19–21, for "Beyond Borders," a conference where church people, academics, students and immigrants together will explore the issues related to immigration and seek ways to better live out Jesus' calling to "welcome the stranger." ¡Nos vemos!

-Paul Neufeld Weaver, assistant professor of education and 2009-10 Civic Engagement Scholar

Beyond Borders:

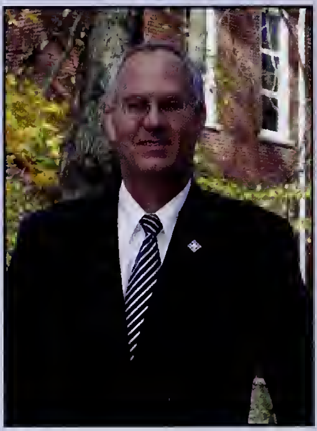
The Role of Immigration in a Global Community

March 19-21, 2010
Hosted by: Bluffton University and the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

Keynote: Daniel Carroll Rodas, author of *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible.*

For more information and to register visit www.bluffton.edu/beyondborders

Preparing students for life and vocation



As president, I welcome you to read the pages of this Bluffton insert, which shares stories of how our educational community prepares students for life and vocation. In these pages you will read about some of the many ways Bluffton students, faculty and staff members are serving the church.

Along with our sister colleges, universities and seminaries within Mennonite Church USA, Bluffton's history, contributions and commitments to the church are strong and deep. Bluffton was founded by Mennonites on the banks of the Little Riley Creek in northwest Ohio in 1899. For 110 years this beautifully-wooded campus has provided the setting in which generations of students have been nurtured in faith and have set life's directions.

That work continues today at Bluffton. On a daily basis curricular and extracurricular programs give meaning and expression to our mission "to prepare students of all backgrounds for life as well as vocation, for responsible citizenship, for service to all peoples, and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom." Bluffton's faculty and staff take seriously our calling as Christian educators. The majority of our faculty is Mennonite and they are joined by others who bring a rich tapestry of Christian faith and service commitments that resonate with Bluffton's Anabaptist educational mission.

During this current academic year, Bluffton welcomes more than 1,000 undergraduate students. In addition, nearly 125 students are enrolled in our M.B.A. and Master's in Education programs at Bluffton, Archbold and Piqua, Ohio. More than 90 percent of our traditional-age students are part of Bluffton's residential life program. By the time they graduate, that same proportion will have participated in one of Bluffton's off campus faculty-led cross cultural learning experiences in international and domestic locations, and most will have engaged in additional service learning activities in community settings.

Bluffton alumni, faculty and staff have served and continue to serve the church as pastors and in other leadership roles. Thank you for your support for Mennonite education that nurtures students and builds and serves the church.

James M Harder

James M. Harder
President

Conference Youth Pastors gather at Bluffton

Youth pastors and youth workers from Ohio Conference gathered at Bluffton, Nov. 12, as part of the second Ohio Youth Pastor Peer Group conference.

Thomas Dunn, youth pastor at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio, and a 2007 Bluffton graduate, introduced the idea of having a day for youth pastors to gather at Bluffton and discuss their ministries.

Darin Nisly, youth pastor at First Mennonite Church in Canton, Ohio; Joe Troyer, youth pastor at Hartville Mennonite, Hartville, Ohio; and Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg, youth pastor at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, worked together to organize the events this year.

Rev. Dr. Randy Keeler, assistant professor of religion, served as a resource for the day-long conference in 2008 and again in 2009. He works extensively with youth ministry majors and is the Ohio Conference Youth Ministry Advocate for the western portion of the conference.

"The day is a resource for the youth pastors," said Keeler. "Today we discussed relationships with God, family, youth, parents, pastors and other staff and adult leaders; and how important these relationships are in ensuring a long-term ministry."

Daniel Mast '10 - A Summer of Service

Daniel Mast, a middle childhood education major from Goshen, Ind., volunteered in Albuquerque, N.M., with a summer education program for children, preschool through sixth grade, who live in the Sandia Vista apartments in Albuquerque.

Mast felt that the experience challenged him and encouraged him that teaching was the right fit for him. "I was able to go through eight hours a day, day after day, week after week, and enjoy being with the kids," Mast said. "You're tired at the end of the day but there is still a feeling of satisfaction."

Near the end of the summer, Mast and the other volunteers were asked to plan an event for the children in the program, as well as their parents and other siblings. Ultimately, they developed a project they felt would have a more lasting impact.

Daniel Mast '10 tutors students in Albuquerque, N.M.

"We purchased school supplies for all 31 children in the program," said Mast. "Through the generous donations of many individuals, churches and organizations, the children all received new backpacks, folders and basic school supplies to begin the new school year."

2009 Volleyball Team Reaches NCAA Tournament!

The Bluffton University volleyball team claimed their first ever Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference (HCAC) tournament championship and qualified for the NCAA Division III tournament, placing them among the elite in college volleyball. While the Beavers lost in the first round, they recorded a 27-5 season record, including a perfect 8-0 mark in the HCAC.

Sophomore outside hitter, Jenna Eshleman is a member of James Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

2009 Awards and Honors

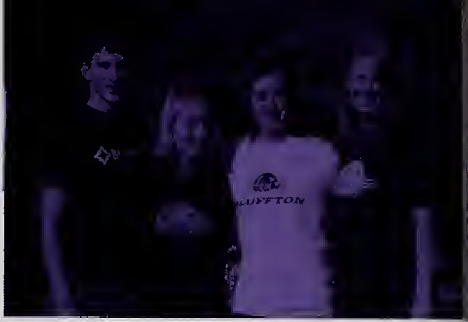
HCAC Most Valuable Player: Shauna Rowland

HCAC Coach of the Year: Head Coach Steve Yarnell

All-HCAC: Jenna Eshleman, Brittany Roth, Nicole Wood

Academic All-HCAC: Jenna Eshleman, Kayla Pickering, Brittany Roth, Courtney Zimmerman

HCAC All-Freshman Team: Brooke Distel



Anna Yoder '09 Perspective on Pilgram Marpeck

Anna Yoder '09, Asheville, N.C., was a student presenter at the Anabaptist Convictions After Marpeck conference held June 26-28 at Bluffton University. More than 75 Anabaptist scholars from around the world gathered at Bluffton to discuss new texts and interpretations of Pilgram Marpeck, a 16th-century radical reformer. Yoder was recognized at the conference for her paper, which won first place in the undergraduate paper contest.

In her research, Yoder argued that Marpeck is one of the voices from the past that is still "adding to the life, depth and the challenge of the current conversation in the Church today." She said, "Studying Marpeck became something that I needed to take with me beyond the classroom and into the church and communities where I find myself."

In her presenation, Yoder argued that Marpeck's concept of the Eucharist encourages Christians to serve one another in love as well as challenges the Church to be willing to be "broken and poured out for the world in the same way that Jesus was broken and poured out for Christians."

Yoder's research on Marpeck and the Eucharist will serve her while she spends a year in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, with Mennonite Mission Network's Radical Journey. "I hope Radical Journey will be a concrete way for me to see and learn how the Church in South Africa is being the Eucharist and how I can be included in what Christ is already doing in different parts of the world."

Minister-in-residence program

Bluffton's minister-in-residence program encourages dialogue and understanding between the university community and Mennonite pastors. Pastors speak at the weekly Chapel service and meet with students, religion professors, religious life staff and the President's Cabinet. David Elkins, pastor at Lima Mennonite Church, Lima, Ohio, enjoyed visiting a Christian Ethics class, taught by Trevor Bechtel. "It was good to get into a classroom learning setting again and to observe students wrestling with ideas as they relate to the church. I really enjoyed attending the class," said Elkins.

For more information about participating in the minister-in-residence program, contact Jeff Boehr, assistant campus pastor for church relations, at boehrj@bluffton.edu.

Ministers-in-residence for the 2009-10 academic year include:

- Mark Van Steenwyk, Central Plains Conference, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Kathy Keener Shantz, Lancaster Conference, Lancaster, Pa.
- David Elkins, pastor, Ohio Conference, Lima, Ohio
- Addie Banks, Lancaster Conference, Bronx, N.Y.
- Hugo Saucedo, Mennonite Voluntary Service, San Antonio, Texas
- Meghan Good, Pacific NW Conference, Albany, Ore.

Bluffton's mission... to prepare all students for life, vocation, responsible citizenship and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom.

Bluffton faculty, staff and students aspire to carry out this mission through discovery, community, respect and service – including service to the church.

A partner with:

Mennonite Education Agency

The education agency of Mennonite Church USA

to the people of Israel, "You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. You shall keep the sabbath because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people. … It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel" Exodus 31:13-17).

The Sabbath points to a covenant; we remember creation and salvation and honor the God who is infinitely creative and infinitely powerful.

But if we are to celebrate Sabbath, we must understand what we mean by the term. Unfortunately there are some bad connotations for Sabbath. We must banish from our thoughts the legalistic understanding that we may have been taught as a child.

Dorothy Bass writes: "For many of us, receiving [Sabbath] will require first discarding our image of Sabbath as a time of negative rules and restrictions, as a day of obligation (Catholics) or a day without play (in memories of strict Protestant childhoods). Relocating our understanding of this day in the biblical stories of creation, exodus and resurrection will be essential if we are to discover the gifts it offers."

It is not a form of legalism. It is not a day to sit around and do nothing solemnly, without joy. It is not a day to refrain from laughter. Sabbath is a day to cease work; work can be defined as whatever requires changing the natural, material world. But it also can be a day to celebrate the fullness of God's creation: surrounding ourselves with loved ones, going on a hike, doing anything relaxing that gives us ease—whether that means gardening or watching our favorite football team.

We live in a world that is anti-Sabbath. Participating in the Sabbath means going against the world. It will seem impractical and unnatural. Because of that, it means that Sabbath celebration is a spiritual discipline. It is a discipline to set aside time to cease work and stop worrying. For that reason we need to be accountable to one another. Particularly since this is challenging, it is helpful to have someone who is willing to ask us, "Did you take a Sabbath this week?"

My "Sabbath-partner" is Joanne Gallardo, my best friend. We let each other know when we are taking our Sabbath and provide support when we feel like something has to get done right now. We have devoted ourselves to being the voice of reason, the voice of God's covenantal promise.

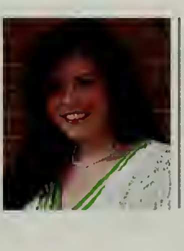
It can get particularly difficult for those who must work on Sundays. We need pastors to work on Sundays, as well as doctors, nurses and pharmacists. There needs to be an effort to have at least one day in every seven devoted to Sabbath-keeping. When I work on Sundays, I either mark down the time I stopped working after worship and cease work until that same time on Monday, thereby honoring my 24-hour covenantal duty, or, more often, I take all of Monday as a Sabbath. I watch football, take a nap, have an extended conversation with my best friend on the phone, work on my knitting projects and, if it's good weather, I take my dog for a long walk in the woods.

Honoring the Sabbath is an ancient practice that honors God and allows God to care for us. In the practice of the Sabbath, we are witnesses to God's care for us. The Sabbath allows us to stop, rest and be rejuvenated. God restores our bodies during this time. This is good for those with health issues as well as those in good health.

During Sabbath time, God restores our tired bodies to work another week with the bodies we were given, regardless of their condition.

When I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia in 2003, I didn't want to learn how to pace myself. I didn't want to learn how to set aside time to rest because I felt as if I were saying, "I can't do it." But proper self-care is empowering. During Sabbath time, God restores our tired bodies to work another week with the bodies we were given, regardless of their condition.

Sabbath keeping is a discipline; it is a time of remembering the covenant and remembering and celebrating creation and redemption. We set aside our work, even though it's hard to release it; there will always be more work to do. It is a discipline to set aside time for rest, but we do so because it is a way for God to care for us and for us to honor God.



Carole Ricketts Corey is pastor at MSU Mennonite Fellowship in East Lansing, Mich.

Spiritual health warning: There is a condition on the rise in our congregations that, though it does not have the telltale signs of SARS or the publicity of H1N1, it has made its presence known. It's called affluenza.

The degrees of infection vary, and while some churches may have it more than others, a few may not suffer from it at all. Affluenza describes the influence that affluence has had on church members and ultimately their congregations.

The church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:14-16, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31). When one part of the body is broken or ill, the whole does not function well (1 Corinthian 12:26), and when it is healthy, it flourishes. Sometimes health can be misunderstood. In our society, it is seen as a good thing to obtain wealth, achieve a certain level of status, and prosper. Is this a bad thing?

> When we talk about the stuff in our lives, we're not building relationships, we're building walls.

Dreamstime.com

How affluenza affects the church

3 ways our affluence gets in the way of who we should be

by Will Schirmer

Does our church life stray away from the values Jesus gave us, as we lean toward a societal pursuit of convenience and comfort to maintain our lifestyles?

I'm not implying it's wrong to have nice church buildings, comfortable furniture or even pads on the pews. But sometimes, consciously or unconsciously, we let our affluence get in the way of who we should be. I see this happening three ways:

We focus on what we have

Does our conversation become preoccupied with our possessions—our house, car, work or recent vacation? Do we talk mostly about the things we have and what we do? Or do we focus on the issues of the kingdom of God? God has blessed us individually to varying degrees. Do we focus on the blessing or the Blesser?

I don't like it when conversations are dominated by talk about material things. I've been a have-not, and it makes me feel like I'm not part of the group if I can't afford or can't do what others are talking about. Other times I have been a have, and I catch myself rambling and need to remember to be sensitive to others in the group.

When we talk about the stuff in our lives, we're not building relationships, we're building walls. When we talk about ourselves, we alienate. When we address the needs of others, we welcome and speak to the soul. When we include others, we build our community of faith.

1 Timothy 6 has an interesting perspective on what we have, what place it should occupy in our lives and what we should pursue.

We focus on what we want

It is part of human nature that no matter how much we have, we always want more. This want is fueled by the consumer-oriented media. We are pummeled with ads for flat-screen TVs and which cable company has the most stations and fastest Internet speed. There is always a newer, more advanced camera or cell phone that makes the current device obsolete. As someone has said: "We buy stuff we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't know or even like."

What does God want for us? Does he want us to constantly change at the pace our world is evolving? We are told often in Psalms and Proverbs to seek God's wisdom. God wants us to improve ourselves, grow and mature. That is what we should pursue as children of God, along with a closer relationship with God and each other.

We focus on ourselves

All this focus on stuff is based in a focus on ourselves. The stuff is for our enjoyment.

But this focus extends to personal attitudes, our knowledge and our self-image, whether it is too low—and we compensate for it by being overbearing or obnoxious—or too high—and we let other people know by looking down on them.

We've heard the term navel gazing. We look at our belly buttons so much we can't see the world around us. Then what good are we? We can't see where we're going, and we step into all kinds of trouble.

I attended a gathering at which someone talked about how we are blessed in our region, how we are a church-oriented society, how that is part of our culture. This person wanted another's opinion about the sinful nature of the people on the other side of the country, how they are suffering for their sins while we are being blessed.

I had to confront what I perceived as arrogance. I said we are not any better than other people, that being a "church-oriented society" does not make us any holier and may even inoculate us from our sinful nature, and therefore we don't address our own pride.

When I asked what he thought, he said, "I'm not buying any of this."

We buy into opinions about ourselves and how we compare with others. By our own standards, we are somewhere between doing OK and being God's favored people in the community, nation or world.

Our pastor once preached about the analogy of God being the potter and we the clay and how God shapes us into the best we can be. The only reason we are good at being anything is because God has transformed us into what we are. How are we going to be the best God can make us if we are fixated on our own standards, our own stuff or spend our time navel gazing?

Do we feel God is calling us to go beyond our comfort zones to places and situations we would normally avoid?

Here are some self-examination questions concerning affluenza that we can ask ourselves without even making a doctor's appointment:

- In our fellowship, do we talk about ourselves or listen to others?
- Do we associate with people who are going to provide something for us or improve our status, or do we spend time with people who need our help or time?
- Do we spend more time talking about our televisions, cars or other stuff, or do we share about the blessings in our relationship with God and others?
- Do we pursue items and places that help us grow or ones that just entertain us?
- Do we feel God is calling us to go beyond our comfort zones to places and situations we would normally avoid?

Take a look in the mirror and see if you have any visible signs of affluenza. Look into your eyes and your heart. Look in the Scriptures and ask God for insight into your condition.

It's flu season, and people are getting their flu shots. Affluenza season is all year round. Let's get our spiritual immunity up and prepare to fight off this illness before it makes us sick.

Will Schirmer is the author of Reaching Beyond the Mennonite Comfort Zone. *He attends Towamencin Mennonite Church in Kulpsville, Pa.*

Places of transformation

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency.

Evidence of divisions and polarization is all around us. You can read it in the papers, watch it on the news, hear it from friends—and sometimes even experience it in the church. Historians and politicians talk about the loss of civility in our culture and society.

Even within this polarized society, people are drawn to those acts of caring that still happen. I was touched by a newscast I saw around Thanksgiving that told the story of a person who for the last 20 years had made it his mission—due to a time in his own life when he didn't have food to eat—to provide food to those in need. It was clear he felt uncomfortable in the spotlight for simply doing what he described as "what is right to do."

While I'd like to think our church isn't highly influenced by the societal trends around us, anecdotal data as well as recent research indicates that in many ways we are much closer to the general culture than many of us want to believe.

Mennonite educational institutions are transformative places for students and the surrounding community.

I'm distraught when some of the same patterns of mistrust and polarization are evident in our denomination. Why do we live with such a spirit of mistrust? It seems we can never give people the benefit of the doubt of their good intentions.

Within this reality, I hope we do not lose our sense of hope—a hope that rises from a faith the "world cannot understand." Faith has sustained Mennonites through many cultural, socioeconomic and demographic changes over the years. Even with the danger and upheaval of this world, as people of faith we live in the comfort of knowing, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Perhaps you are wondering why I write about culture and faith when, in my role as executive director of Mennonite Education Agency, you would have expected me to write about education.

By illustrating the challenges of today's world, I can better explain why I believe Mennonite Church USA, our immediate communities and the wider world need Mennonite schools, colleges/universities and seminaries.

Mennonite educational institutions are transformative places for students and the surrounding community. In a society that shows so many characteristics of fragmentation, our institutions are places that bring people together from diverse backgrounds and experiences and teach the value of a community of intellectual discernment by modeling it.

In a world of self-interest that places high value on individuality and "what is there for me," our institutions are committed to help our students understand their responsibility toward the wider community and for it to become an integral part of their lives and professions. This understanding of community is rooted in our belief that Jesus calls us to a life of discipleship.

Another way to describe this kind of community is how the Mennonite World Conference describes one of the core convictions of the Anabaptist world family: "The church is a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith and follow Christ in life."

We also live in a world of violence; much of the news these days describes act after act of violence around the globe. During times like these, we need our institutions as places that put forth the understanding that peacemaking is not just a viable option in the resolution of conflicts but also for everyday life.

We as people of faith believe God created all human beings and that we are called to "live in peace with each other and take care of the rest of creation" (from the summary of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*).

There are many other reasons (too numerous to mention here) why the church and the world need Mennonite education. Our Mennonite educational institutions help strengthen our denomination, our immediate communities and the broader world.

By helping the transformative experience of many, the world is being changed one person at a time. Like the person in the newscast, one person can make a difference in the lives of many. TM

We can make music

We have just been through a festive time of year, with all manner of family get-togethers. Reunions that used to involve lots of rambunctious children are aging. The original parents, now grandparents or great-grandparents, continue to hold the family lore, retelling beloved stories, reciting nostalgic poems and recounting the accomplishments of their scattered family, while young adults and new parents establish their own freshly minted holiday traditions and more intimate gatherings.

The subtext of the extended family reunions is the tension between the shared history that holds us together and our now disparate lives that stretch us apart. From rural beginnings on a farm to life in big cities and far countries, the stretching threatens to tear the fabric itself. Around the edges of the reunion, one hears snatches of stories about how a cousin who's divorced and now remarried is birthing a second family on another continent, how a brother-in-law of a sister succumbed to depression and promiscuity, how a mother returned from service on another continent crushed in spirit, how a grandmother who still wears a covering embraced her unchurched daughter-in-law, how a grandson is living with his girlfriend and how another grandson has become incredibly rich and famous. There are many secrets and much that is left unsaid.

What astounds me most, however, is what holds us together. True, there are the memories of the way we were, and those are powerful. But even more powerful is the humble grace of the aging ones—the elders, whether single or married, who model sturdy love and faithfulness no matter what. Those of us who tend to wander into distant lands are drawn home again and again by the gravitational pull of their love.

In this new year, Gerald and I will celebrate our 35th anniversary. In years to come, despite all our fumbles and foibles, I hope our love and faithfulness no matter what will be the center of gravity that draws our scattered family home.

I well remember that early in our relationship I had misgivings about the work, time and commitment necessary to nurture a long-term relationship. I wrote in my journal, "My independence is precious to me. This becomes more and more obvious when I sense that it may be decreasing or that it may be taken away from me. The prospects [of marriage] are exciting, but I don't want it to make me more incapable of managing alone."

In large measure, it was Gerald's fair play that eased my fears. An excerpt from one of his voluminous letters during a semester I spent in Europe: "Sara, when I try to understand my feelings about you, I realize I feel fiercely gentle; lovingly protective yet wanting to see you struggle for yourself; wanting you to be loyal and committed to me yet wanting you to be strong and independent; wanting you to be able to be submissive yet wanting you to be free, a whole person in your own right; wishing so much to be with you yet wanting to be able to stand apart."

On another occasion he pictured our partnership within an orchestra: "In some of the orchestra's themes we will only have bit parts, in others we may have duets; eventually you will have an important solo in a major work and I will be right there to support and uphold. In another I may have a solo, and yet I will know you are with me. We can make music!"

On a beautiful sunlit morning in early July we sealed our marriage covenant before friends and families gathered under a huge elm in my parent's backyard. I told Gerald: "When this all began between us I wasn't very hopeful. With singlemindedness I was preparing to go it alone. Your warmth and willingness to give of yourself melted my tower of resistance."

Someone described it this way: What is more foolish or profound than marriage? Two people promise to share life together—physical, economic and spiritual. And that promise is made in the face of certain change, upheaval and death. It isn't surprising that so many of us buckle under the strain.

Mark Twain observed that no couple could begin to know the bliss of being married short of 25 years together. I think he was right. Bliss comes of much shared joy along with weathering storms, disappointments and deaths—while learning to make music with more and more complex harmonies. And when marriages fail, some of us become even more attuned musicians. It is the music of sturdy love and faithfulness no matter what that is the center of attraction in reunions that makes us glad to stay connected—reunions where coming home is a celebration of God's good gift of family. TM

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian practices at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

What is more foolish or profound than marriage?

Colleges, universities, seminaries respond to recession

Some measures include salary and benefits freeze, involuntary terminations

The current economic environment has impacted the higher education institutions of Mennonite Church USA—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bethel College, Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College and Hesston College. How are they faring? The colleges, universities and seminaries have taken actions to remain financially viable.

Mennonite higher education institutions, in general, incurred a reduction in net assets as a result of the meltdown of the financial markets in the last year.

These losses were mostly unrealized (investment paper losses)—in other words, the values of their investment accounts dropped dramatically, just as the values of individual retirement accounts have dropped. The losses could be recovered if market values return to previous levels over time.

The dramatic decline of these accounts and the resulting decline of investment income—which supports the general funds and student aid—required each institution to take a variety of measures to ensure their long-term health: delaying capital expenditures, reducing budgets and refinancing long-term debt for lower interest rates.

The payout policy of "underwater" endowments was adjusted to allow for continued distributions at a reduced rate. Many decisions affected those working for the institution: no or limited salary increases, delaying hiring for vacant positions, consolidating positions, involuntary terminations, and reducing or eliminating contributions to retirement accounts.

To address the economic hardship on the families of their students, some institutions increased financial aid at a faster pace than their tuitions increased. Also, to bolster student aid plans that rely on endowment earnings, faculty, staff and constituency were asked to contribute directly to the institutions' student aid funds.

The economic experiences over the last decade have been reminders to all the institutions that over time there will be extended periods of both strength and weakness in financial markets and the underlying economy and how important it is to manage carefully and judiciously through both the up and down cycles.

The Web site address for audited statements for Mennonite Education Agency and the higher education institutions is www.mennoniteeducation.org/audit.—*Rachel Nussbaum Eby*

Audited statements show assets change

It is difficult to report on the financial activities of institutions as large and complex as Mennonite Church USA universities, colleges and seminaries. But because the institutions are required to utilize generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), it is possible to do an "apples to apples" comparison by reviewing each institution's change in net assets at the end of the fiscal year on June 30. For those who want to look behind the numbers here, read each institution's audited statement at www.mennoniteeducation.org/audit.

In each case, the primary reason for a decline in net assets was due to unrealized losses in investments (see article above).

Note: An institution's internal net worth includes fixed assets; this includes the historic costs, for example, of buildings and land. However, the values assigned to those assets may not be representative of their liquidation value.—*Everett Thomas*

Net assets at MC USA higher education institutions

	June 30, 2008	Change	June 30, 2009
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*	$26,660,720	(6,114,014)	$20,546,706
Bethel College	34,656,501	(4,171,774)	30,484,727
Bluffton University	47,233,488	(5,876,447)	41,357,041
Eastern Mennonite University	50,795,925	(7,707,971)	43,087,954
Goshen College	193,708,795	(44,178,626)	151,536,353
Hesston College	23,997,811	(2,345,626)	21,652,185
Mennonite Education Agency**	816,900	(367,992)	448,908

*Binational **Mennonite Education Agency activity includes more than Mennonite Church USA colleges, universities and seminaries

SOOPers, staff lend a hand for harvest

Blueberry patch could raise over $35,000 annually for Illinois church.

The blueberry fields were planted, and the harvest was at hand this summer for Rehoboth Mennonite Church in Pembroke Township, Ill. Although the area is rich in natural resources, it is not economically developed. To find jobs or shop, residents must take their capital beyond Pembroke's borders.

Rehoboth hosted several work teams and SOOP participants this summer that helped the congregation prune, maintain and—finally—harvest buckets of blueberries. But more than that, the volunteers helped connect Rehoboth to communities, congregations and resources throughout the Midwest.

Although there are fewer than 10 members, a new energy is springing up in the Rehoboth congregation.

"We do lots of mission work, and the Lord keeps blessing us," says Rose Covington, a member who has served as church elder for 12 years. "We feel like we are witnessing a miracle firsthand in some ways."

In 2007, members of the Retreat Center board wrote a letter to *The Mennonite* asking for support and help in revitalizing the congregation's facilities and ministries. John Powell, then Mennonite Mission Network's U.S. Ministries director, read the letter and began a conversation with church leaders.

In addition to a church building, the congregation owns 20 acres of land, including a two-acre blueberry patch and a former camp area. Over the past two years, Mission Network, the Rehoboth Retreat Center Board and Illinois Mennonite Conference staff have worked with members of the church on networking and revisioning projects.

Since then, groups of volunteers coordinated by Mission Network staff, the Rehoboth Retreat board, and community and church members have come to Rehoboth.

This year, on the eve of its 60th anniversary, Rehoboth was featured in the SOOP newsletter as a service location for participants.

"Using SOOP volunteers to respond to this congregation's real needs seemed like a perfect fit," says Arloa Bontrager, Mission Network director of the SOOP program, a joint Christian service program through Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Association of Retired Persons and Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

Barbara Longoria of Indianapolis saw this opportunity advertised and signed up to help with the harvest. For 10 days, Longoria picked blueberries from breakfast until dinner, then filled 53 five-pound buckets. In the evenings she prepared the berries for sale. She also attended a weekly Bible study and Sunday worship.

For Mission Network staff member Dean Heisey, who has worked with the Rehoboth congregation for two years, this SOOP position sounded like the perfect summer vacation. "The whole partnership with Rehoboth started out as my job, but it took hold of my heart, and now it's my passion, too," says Heisey, a member of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Heisey spent two weeks in Rehoboth, and issued invitations to other friends to join in. Over the course of the two weeks, Heisey was joined by four others, including three teenagers from the Elkhart, Ind., and Cody, Wyo., areas. The group picked blueberries and removed trees and brush that had encroached into the patch.

Chris Birky, a former pastor at Hopewell Mennonite Church in Kouts, Ind., volunteered to sell berries at his roadside stand and church, and other local volunteers took turns selling blueberries at area farmer's markets.

Revenue from the blueberries raised more than $1,000 for the Rehoboth congregation—money that will be used to continue to redevelop their facilities and fund new ministries. If kept pruned and fully harvested, the blueberry patch could raise more than $35,000 annually for the church. For more information on SOOP, visit Service.MennoniteMission.net.—*Hannah Heinzekehr of Mennonite Mission Network*

Dean Heisey

Tom McDowell Sr. of Community Mennonite Church moved limbs during a Markham work day at Rehoboth in March 2009.

Greensboro massacre survivors confront pain

Joanna Shenk describes the challenges these peacemakers offer MC USA.

Beloved Community Center

Joyce and Nelson Johnson, leaders at the Beloved Community Center and members of Faith Community Church, speak in Greensboro, N.C.

In Greensboro, N.C., wounds of the past continue to be relived. While King J, whose real name is Jorge Cornell, of the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (ALKQN), works for black-brown unity, he faces the persecution of a police force with a history of abuse.

Cornell moved to Greensboro a few years ago from New York, having retired from involvement with the ALKQN. He was not planning to create a street group in Greensboro until he saw how Hispanic people were being mistreated by the police force. Then he decided to provide support.

I learned about the work of the ALKQN while attending the 30th anniversary commemoration, organized by the Beloved Community Center, of the Greensboro Massacre. On Nov. 3, 1979, five labor organizers were killed by Ku Klux Klan and Nazi members—all while under the watchful eye of the Greensboro Police Department.

As associate for Interchurch Relations in Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA, I was invited to Greensboro by Ched Myers and Elaine Enns to learn about the work of the Beloved Community Center. Based on my work of relating to peace-minded, discipleship community groups around the country (within and outside Mennonite Church USA), Myers and Enns, Mennonites and longtime friends of the Beloved Community Center, encouraged me to cultivate relationships in Greensboro.

> Put your weapons down … so we can talk peace. —King J.

The center, founded by Nelson and Joyce Johnson, survivors of the Greensboro Massacre, is an organization committed to affirming and realizing the equality, dignity, worth and potential of every person and confronting the systems of domination. In order to face the painful past of the massacre, the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Project began in 2003—the first project of its kind in the United States and an effort that was strongly supported by the Beloved Community Center.

At the 30th anniversary commemoration, survivors of the massacre emphasized the inability of the community to move into the future without confronting the pain and oppression of the past.

Unfortunately, the wrenching pain of Greensboro's history is being lived again as police bring similar mistreatment to those working for black-brown unity. As members of ALKQN seek to speak for those in the community who are voiceless, they are being targeted as criminals. At the Beloved Community Center the story of the ALKQN is being told and has been a space for black and brown street groups to come together, reconcile and work for the betterment of their community.

"My goal is to bring peace to the streets; black and brown, come together as one," Cornell said at a 2008 media conference organized by the Beloved Community Center. "I'm asking for all Bloods, Crips, MS-13—everybody out there that represents something, to put your weapons down, and let's come to a table so we can talk peace."

Just over a year later, Cornell sat on trial for an offense he did not commit. He referred to the earlier media conference. He said, "I have done my best over the last 13 months. I have been received positively by most parts of the community. I participated in a major black and brown unity conference last October, attended by over 250. … I have worked with various street groups, and we actually created a written peace agreement. Working with the Pulpit Forum and the Beloved Community Center, I was part of a broad plan for peace in Greensboro."

As a Mennonite who is committed to working against oppression in its many forms and to reconciliation, I was challenged by the example of Cornell, the Johnsons and the many others connected to the Beloved Community Center in Greensboro. I encountered a community that has been deeply affected by injustice, particularly in its racist forms, but which has not given up or turned from Jesus' example of love and forgiveness.—*Joanna Shenk for Mennonite Church USA*

MDS fixes forgotten homes

Mennonite Disaster Service repairs damages from Hurricane Ike.

Mennonite Disaster Service continues to work in areas that seem to be forgotten. In four years, many areas of the Gulf Coast have been hit by four hurricanes: Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike. But most people seem to only remember Katrina and Rita.

Judy Herring, director for family and community development with Southern Mutual Help Association, says of the hurricanes, "All four have impacted our area in different ways: with wind, water and many trees that were weakened by Rita [and] impacted by Ike."

According to the Climatic Data Center, U.S. Department of Commerce, Hurricane Ike was the third largest hurricane in size to hit the United States. A National Hurricane Center report stated that the damage in the United States alone was estimated at $24 billion. But damage from this hurricane seems largely forgotten.

"This is a poor, poor community," Herring says, "and when you have a house in bad condition to start with, and then a hurricane comes, which creates leaks that may have persisted for over a year, what started out as minor damage is now a big problem to deal with. Health issues become a big part of our criteria for helping."

Mennonite Disaster Service has been working in the New Iberia, La., area since 2006, following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Herring says she just closed the last of 1,021 jobs that were the result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. More than 5,000 volunteers worked on those projects. Herring guesses that over half the jobs and volunteers have been through MDS.

MDS continues to work on houses impacted by Hurricane Ike. Houses that once had minor damage now have big problems. By addressing this type of damage, MDS has been able to help those who have, as volunteer Carolyn Ringenberg of Flanagan, Ill., says, "fallen through the cracks."

Talking about just one homeowner, "Miss Rita" Simoneaux (see photo), Ringenberg says, "She didn't fit anywhere to get help. She was one of those many people who applied for every kind of help but got nothing. We need to look for those most in need."

Carol Workman of Orrville, Ohio, another MDS volunteer, says, "[Miss Rita] was destitute in her own home." Her house had also suffered from two fires.

Everybody said this house couldn't be fixed—now it's gorgeous.—Miss Rita

"I had wind damage," she says, "and it messed up my bedroom. [After this help] I was able to sleep in my own bed for the first time in 10 years. I didn't have no money to buy a new mattress."

Having gone bankrupt due to medical bills, Miss Rita lost her home and ended up buying another for $27,000.

"When I moved into this house, it didn't have no windows," she says.

Scott Sundberg

Miss Rita in her house, rebuilt by MDS.

Miss Rita is estranged from her family and has struggled to get a clear title to her house.

"Homeowner Rita's thankfulness seemed almost more of a blessing for us," says volunteer Jake Martens of Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. "She had no electricity, no ceiling lights, no plumbing—but a whole lot of critters. For 10 years she had prayed that someone would come and help her. She was in tears when told that her house was going to be fixed."

Martens also said that before MDS came in and fixed her house, Miss Rita had to do dishes in her bathtub. Now she has a new sink and a house that she says makes her feel like Cinderella.

"Everybody said this house couldn't be fixed—now it's gorgeous," Miss Rita says. "It's a dream come true. Thank God that these people came to my rescue. I went to lots of organizations looking for help, but no one else would help. Then the Mennonites came, and they put me in [replaced] a window. These people have a special place in heaven for them."

For people in this community, Herring says, "This is a disaster of a different kind. There are several similar situations in Franklin similar to Miss Rita's."—*Scott Sundberg of Mennonite Disaster Service*

Jim Schrag, executive director, looks back

Schrag's manuscript on the 2001 denominational merger will focus on change.

June Krehbiel

Jim Schrag (right), executive director for Mennonite Church USA, talks with Vern Preheim during Schrag's retirement party on Nov. 30, 2009.

The words of Isaiah 6:8 didn't impress 13-year-old Jim Schrag at the time. His pastor, Arnold Epp, at First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., presented "Here am I, send me" to young Jim in 1958 along with similar verses to other baptismal candidates.

Only later, when his father called attention to their meaning, did the young man recognize the significance of the words.

During three decades of church leadership, the Isaiah verse inspired Schrag, who retired Nov. 30, 2009, from his position as executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

He ministered a total of 36 years within Mennonite congregations and in denominational leadership.

Beginning in 1996, he served three years as general secretary for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), then two years as project leader for the team that guided the former GC and Mennonite Church toward a merger. Since 2001, he had been at the helm of the fledgling denomination.

Schrag's most recent call from God, however, finds him not on the way to a meeting but writing a book-length manuscript about the years leading up to and including the merger. Faith and culture stand together as his way to describe the coming together.

Schrag's writing project began last August. Since then, Ron Byler of Elkhart, Ind., served as acting executive director for Mennonite Church USA.

Beginning in January, Ervin R. Stutzman of Harrisonburg, Va., will lead the church as the denomination's next executive director (see page 12).

Schrag has picked Bethlehem (Pa.) 1983 to begin the retelling. At the time he had pastored Tabor Mennonite Church near Goessel, Kan., for 10 years and was cochairing the planning committee for the first joint delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. A statement on inter-Mennonite cooperation was one item discussed in joint sessions—the first step toward a merger between the two denominations.

In 1995, delegates to sessions held in Wichita, Kan., granted approval for integration. The next year the GC called him to the position of general secretary, and his tenure in churchwide leadership began. With a smile he describes that time as feeling like he was "thrown into the water and asked to swim."

The theme Schrag is pursuing in his book is "change." Amid the changes the new denomination has experienced lie cultural differences.

"The culture brought us together, and the culture kept us apart," he says, describing the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church.

"I used to think that the forces for integration and merger lay basically on an Elkhart and Newton axis," Schrag says. "But then I realized that's just a smattering of the historical pieces that have been trying to bring parts of the church together for decades."

He's learning that change within the church is best measured in decades or even centuries. And organizational questions "spiral along," resurfacing regularly, to be talked about again and again.

The culture brought us together, and the culture kept us apart.—Jim Schrag

"Spiritual issues, too," he says, "draw people together and keep them apart. The experience of being the church is not entirely a spiritual or cultural human experience. It's both. We get confused when we emphasize one over the other."

A missional calling is "the best thing we have going for us," he says. "It takes us from our history of separation for the sake of purity and preservation on a slow odyssey toward engagement with the world, where God is active."

Staying within traditional cultures and communities is not the future of the church. "God has provided some new people, especially from other cultures, who have said to us, 'We share your understanding of Scripture; that's us, too,'" Schrag says.—*June Krehbiel of Mennonite Church USA*

Mother of MVSers says empty nest matured family

Mennonite Voluntary Service participants learn independence, simple living.

Marsha Schmidt of Newton, Kan., knows many people in her Mennonite circle who give up time with family because of church or mission work. But she never dreamed her two daughters would move away from Newton in the same year to do service.

Kara, 26, and Kiley, 23, the only children of Marsha and Rod Schmidt, served with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS), a program of Mennonite Mission Network, in Colorado from September 2008 through last August.

After taking them to two different settings—Kara to the city of Boulder and Kiley to rural La Jara, five hours from Boulder, the couple returned to an empty nest.

The family was close. They belonged to First Mennonite Church in Newton, and the daughters lived either nearby or in their home after graduation from Bethel College in North Newton, Kan. Separating after such closeness was a sacrifice, but the emotional and spiritual growth was worth it, Marsha says.

"I never dreamed both my children would be in service at the same time, but I shouldn't have been surprised," she says.

The distance of a day's drive to her daughters' doorsteps stretched the family, Marsha says. For example, Kiley is a horse lover. Her horse died in Kansas while she was in Colorado.

She worked at a therapeutic riding ranch in Monte Vista as part of her MVS assignment. When the ranch director discovered Kiley had researched the subject of using literacy activities at horse ranches for at-risk kids, the director asked Kiley to lead a camp on site.

My prayer was that they would stick it out and end strong. That's what happened.—Marsha Schmidt

Baffled by this huge assignment, Kiley invited Marsha, a reading tutor for first graders in the Newton Public Schools, to help.

Though nervous, Marsha stepped into Kiley's world.

"I brought my background," Marsha says, "but she was the one who knew the kids and other workers. I felt like I was partnering with her but also enjoying my own service experience at the same time."

Kara served in a variety of roles, including working with toddlers, assisting at a humane society and sorting donations at a thrift store. Kara didn't feel she used her gifts to the maximum in these roles. But she learned that being of service meant perseverance. In that challenge, she gained new respect for the loving generosity of her family, as well as her new church family at Boulder Mennonite, she says.

Laurie Oswald Robinson

Marsha Schmidt (center) has her two daughters—Kara (left) and Kiley (right)—back home after they participated in Mennonite Voluntary Service at two different sites in Colorado at the same time.

Now that the daughters are back in the family home and determining their next steps, the family is transitioning again. Marsha gained new respect for her daughters' abilities to live gratefully with simple lifestyles—including tight food budgets in their MVS houses and a small personal stipend each month.

But now she and Rod are helping their adult children integrate the value of having done service during tough economic times when new jobs upon return home are scarce, and loans for graduate-level work are tough to secure.

Kara has a part-time job at Ten Thousand Villages and hopes to apply to master's degree programs in library science. Kiley is still searching for a job and may seek a master's degree in school psychology.

"After coming back home, they've had to start over," Marsha says. "In this light, their service was a financial sacrifice, too. They didn't make any money and now need to reestablish themselves financially.

"My prayer was that they would stick it out and end strong. That's what happened. And now that they are home, that is still my prayer—that their lives will continue to be a witness to others and that they will depend on God for whatever the next steps will be," Marsha says.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson for Mennonite Church USA*

Twelve MCC entities approve seven statements

'In the name of Christ' is incorporated into MCC statements for the first time.

The delegate body at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada's annual meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in November 2009 endorsed seven foundational statements to guide the work of MCC, the last of the 12 MCC entities to do so.

The statements, also referred to as the "new wine," were developed through a re-visioning and restructuring process called New Wine/New Wineskins: Reshaping MCC for the 21st Century. New Wine/New Wineskins was a listening and consultation process that involved more than 2,000 people from 50 countries participating in 60 meetings.

Arli Klassen, executive director of MCC binational, says the statements represent the first time these 12 entities have expressed a shared vision. "The statements bring new clarity that will inspire MCC's work in the name of Christ," she says.

The seven statements articulate MCC's identity, purpose, vision, priorities, approaches, values and convictions. The recommendations for the "new wineskins"—a new structure for MCC—are still in the development stages.

One of the core statements is MCC's purpose: "MCC endeavors to share God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice."

Klassen points to two key elements of the purpose statement—that the motivation for MCC's mission is to share God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ and that MCC intentionally works both to meet basic needs and for peace and justice.

> The statements bring new clarity that will inspire Mennonite Central Committee's work.—Arli Klassen

She notes that for the first time the words "in the name of Christ" are incorporated into MCC's foundational statements.

MCC priorities identified through the New Wine/New Wineskins process are justice and peacebuilding, disaster relief and sustainable community development. The new statements, says Klassen, both reflect MCC's historic commitment to relief, development and peace and clearly state that peace cannot be built without addressing injustice.

MCC's identity as a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches is strengthened through including, in the statements, the "Shared Convictions" of global Anabaptists as adopted by the Mennonite World Conference General Council in March 2006.

This is the first time MCC has had a statement of faith, Klassen says, noting that it has always drawn theology from the churches to which it is accountable.

Many churches, she says, expressed strong affirmation for MCC including these shared Christian faith convictions in its foundational statements.

The MCC statements were developed by an Inquiry Task Force of 34 people. The recommendations were endorsed by a group of 95 people, representing the 12 MCCs and church denominations in June 2009.

The next step in the process was endorsement by the 12 MCC boards, MCC Canada's annual meeting being the last scheduled.

The "new wineskins" or revised structure recommendations are expected to be endorsed in 2011 and fully implemented in 2012. The full MCC foundational statements are at http://newwineskins.mcc.org.—*Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee*

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Hyattsville church denied ACC membership

Six congregations have changed area conference membership since 2002.

In early 2009, Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church applied for membership in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). In November 2009, they learned that Atlantic Coast Conference leaders decided not to proceed further with their transfer request at this time.

"ACC said they would like to have Allegheny Mennonite Conference and Hyattsville resolve their differences first before considering ACC membership," Hyattsville pastor Cynthia Lapp said on Dec. 11, 2009. "We were disappointed; I don't know that we were surprised. We're not unaware how difficult it is, even in the broader Christian church, to talk about [human sexuality] issues."

Hyattsville has been under discipline from Allegheny Conference since November 2005. The discipline centers around Hyattsville's membership guidelines, which embrace members in monogamous, same-sex relationships.

"Being under discipline means 'no vote' at conference or Mennonite Church USA [Delegate Assembly], and our members cannot hold office," said Lapp, who also expressed hope about renewed conversations.

"There's a new model of collaboration between Allegheny Conference, ACC and Mennonite Church USA," Lapp said, "which I think is great. Before, it was just Allegheny Conference and Hyattsville."

Since the beginning of Mennonite Church USA in 2002, six congregations have changed membership from one conference to another. These include, in alphabetical order: Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship changed from Southeast Mennonite Conference to Central District Conference; Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., changed from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to Atlantic Coast Conference; Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio, changed from Virginia Mennonite Conference to Ohio Mennonite Conference; First Mennonite Church of Berne, Ind., changed from Central District Conference to Ohio Mennonite Conference; North Side Mennonite, Hagerstown, Md., changed from Atlantic Coast Conference to Franklin Mennonite Conference; Shalom Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., changed from Virginia Mennonite Conference to Central District Conference.

Hyattsville Mennonite Church becomes the first Mennonite Church USA congregation to have its formal application denied when asking to change its membership from one area conference to another.—*Everett J. Thomas*

RESOURCES

The War of the Lamb by John Howard Yoder (Brazos Press, 2009, $24.99) covers pacifism, just war theory and just peacemaking theory. It crystallizes Yoder's argument that his proposed Christian ethics is not sectarian and a matter of withdrawal. He also argues that Christian just war and Christian pacifist traditions are basically compatible and that the just war tradition presumes against all violence. Before his death in 1997, Yoder planned the essays and structure of this book, which he intended to be his last work.

Realizing Our Intentions: A Guide for Churches and Colleges with Distinctive Missions by Albert J. Meyer (Abilene Christian University Press, 2009, $14.99) is written for educators, church leaders, board members and supporters of Christian higher education. Meyer draws on his many experiences in higher education in order to provide specific and practical strategies for healthy and long-term work with faith-based institutions.

In God's Womb: A Spiritual Memoir by Edwina Gateley (Orbis Books, 2009, $20) reflects on her life as a Catholic lay missioner, poet, artist, writer and religious educator. Gateley founded the Voluntary Missionary Movement in her native Britain and Genesis House in Chicago. She also wrote *Soul Sisters* and *Christ in the Margins.*

How to Write Your Personal or Family History (If You Don't Do It, Who Will? by Katie Funk Wiebe (Good Books, 2009, $11.95) helps beginning memoir writers and writers of family histories get started collecting the stories of their lives. She gives hints for recalling distant memories and tracking down family heirlooms.

A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures by Alvin Dueck and Kevin Reimer (Brazos Press, 2009, $24.99) encourages mental health practitioners to mine their own traditions for gifts of healing and to allow clients to bring their native ethnic or religious voice into therapy.

Theology as if Jesus Matters: An Introduction to Christianity's Main Convictions by Ted Grimsrud (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2009, $19.95) considers what theology would be like if it consistently took Jesus' central command to love God and neighbor as the most important consideration. It includes responses from five others.

Anglo Anabaptist congregations in the cities are growing

Within the rich mosaic of Mennonite Church USA is a distinctive set of congregations that will play an increasingly important role in our denomination's future. Mennonite racial-ethnic congregations are growing, but there is another group of congregations whose growth, creativity and Anabaptist commitments are also making a valuable contribution to MC USA.

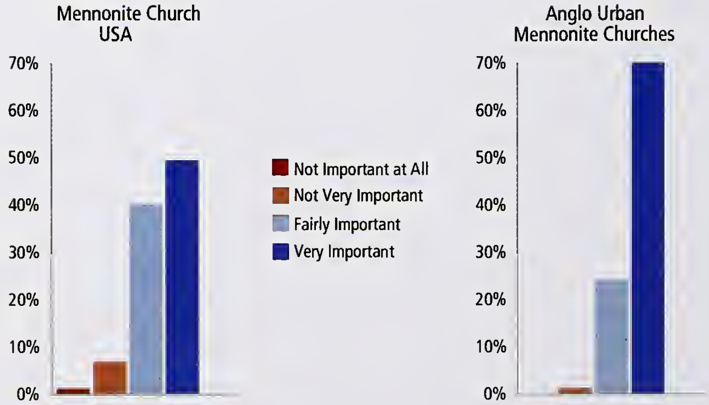
After checking the Mennonite Church USA Directory and making some phone calls, I compiled a list (not exhaustive) of MC USA congregations that share the following characteristics:

- urban or suburban
- predominantly Anglo
- attracting young adults and generally growing
- strong Mennonite identity
- membership of at least 70.

I asked all the congregations on my list to complete an online survey, and in the spring of 2009 seven of them agreed to do so. The survey consisted of 26 questions taken directly from the recent MC USA survey (Church Member Profile 2006) so I could compare results with the denomination as a whole. The questions I selected focused on distinctively Mennonite convictions (e.g. peacemaking, service to others, mutual accountability, simple lifestyle), various social/moral issues (e.g. social justice, abortion, divorce, use of alcohol, homosexuality) and attitudes toward evangelism. I combined the survey rults from those seven congregations with results from my own congregation, making 458 responses from the following eight congregations:

- First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis
- First Mennonite Church of Denver
- Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church
- Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.
- Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church
- Pittsburgh Mennonite Church
- Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church
- Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

How important is peacemaking and nonviolence in your personal faith commitments?



1.4%	Not Important at All	0.0%
7.9%	Not Very Important	2.0%
40.4%	Fairly Important	25.7%
50.4%	Very Important	72.4%

If these eight congregations are representative of growing, predominantly Anglo, urban/suburban Mennonite congregations, then the survey results reveal that this set of congregations is more strongly committed to Anabaptist convictions than the denomination as a whole.

For instance, in response to the question, "How important is peacemaking and nonviolence in your personal faith commitments?" over 72 percent of Anglo-urbans said "very important" compared with 50 percent of MC USA members as a whole. And in response to the statement, "It is wrong for Christians to fight in any war," 88 percent of Anglo-urbans agreed, compared with 65 percent of MC USA members.

Regarding other distinctive Mennonite beliefs, the Anglo-urbans displayed equal or sometimes slightly stronger convictions than MC USA members as a whole. The commitment to serving those within, as well as outside, the church was similarly high for each group, as was the commitment to a simple lifestyle, to giving and receiving counsel, and to building strong bonds of community.

In response to the statement, "Distinctive Mennonite beliefs are very important to me," the Anglo-urbans agreed by 92 percent compared with 87 percent of MC USA members. Similarly, the Anglo-urbans were five percentage points higher on thinking that Mennonite teachings more accurately reflect the Word of God than the teachings of any other denomination. They were also five percentage points higher on their personal commitment to MC USA. (The statistical margin of error makes these results essentially even.)

On the other hand, when it comes to filing lawsuits or swearing in court, the Anglo-urbans are slightly less committed to avoiding these practices than are MC USA members as a whole (though both groups were about evenly split on whether engaging in these is right or not).

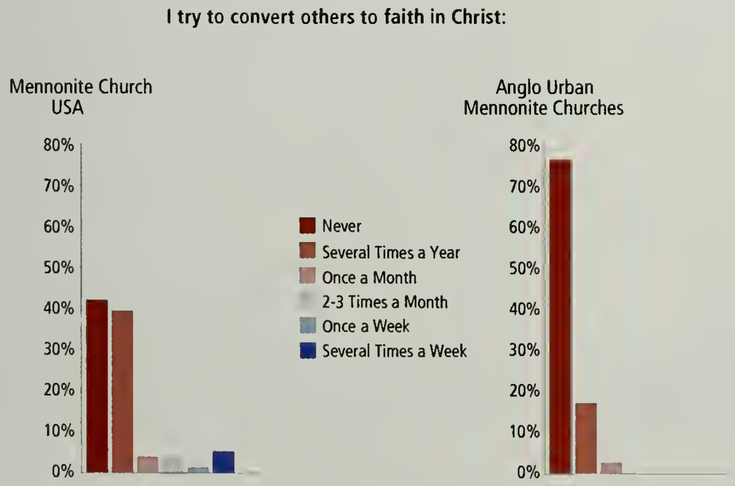
The differences between Anglo-urbans and MC USA members as a whole are most apparent when it comes to how they responded to various social and moral issues. Fifty percent of MC USA members said that drinking alcohol is "always wrong," but only 7 percent of Anglo-urbans thought so. Similarly, 57 percent of MC USA members thought abortion is always wrong, but only 10 percent of Anglo-urbans agreed.

For the denomination as a whole, 61 percent indicated that divorce is "usually wrong" or "always wrong," but the Anglo-urbans checked those options only 27 percent of the time. Regarding premarital sex, 74 percent of MC USA members said it is "always wrong," compared with just 27 percent of the Anglo-urbans (although both groups were equally and overwhelmingly opposed to adultery). Perhaps the biggest difference was attitudes toward homosexuality, with 79 percent of MC USA members saying homosexual relations between consenting adults is "always wrong," compared to 18 percent of the Anglo-urbans. On the other hand, Anglo-urbans are far more committed to promoting social justice, with 61 percent indicating this is "very important," compared with 29 percent of MC USA members.

On these last two issues, the young adults (aged 21-35) in the Anglo-urban congregations are even further apart from other MC USA members. Within the Anglo-urban congregations, 34 percent of young adults said homosexual relations between consenting adults are "never wrong," compared with 16 percent of the older adults in those congregations, and 3 percent in MC USA. And over 76 percent of Anglo-urban young adults consider promoting social justice in the world as "very important" to their personal faith commitments, compared with 55 percent of older Anglo-urban adults (and 27 percent of MC USA, as noted above). Regarding distinctive Mennonite convictions, Anglo-urban young adults are as committed as the older adults in their congregations.

Urban and suburban areas are good ground for Anabaptism and rich soil for the future of Mennonite Church USA

I try to convert others to faith in Christ:



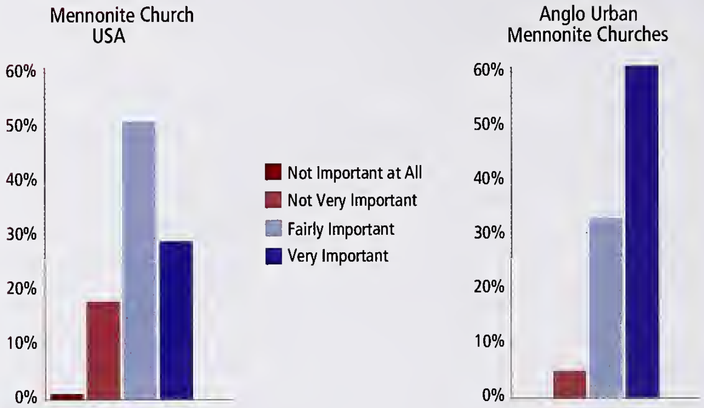
42.0%	Never	76.5%
40.5%	Several Times a Year	18.1%
4.0%	Once a Month	2.7%
5.0%	2-3 Times a Month	1.1%
2.5%	Once a Week	0.9%
6.0%	Several Times a Week	0.7%

When it comes to evangelism, Anglo-urbans are far more skittish than most other members of MC USA, especially when couched in the language of "converting" others. Whereas 42 percent of MC USA members admit that they "never" try to convert others to faith in Christ, that number rises to over 76 percent for Anglo-urbans—despite the fact that the survey is based on eight Anglo-urban congregations that are attracting young adults and growing. Although conversion and evangelism have negative connotations for most Anglo-urbans, they talk about their faith with others about as frequently as other Mennonites.

In summary, the survey revealed that growing, Anglo-urban Mennonite congregations are at least equally committed to Anabaptist convictions, and even more strongly committed to the peace position, than are members of MC USA as a whole. On various social issues, these congregations are more tolerant of diversity and more strongly committed to social justice. They dislike trying to convert others but are still sharing their faith and growing. And the young adults who are attracted to these congregations share these convictions with equal and sometimes greater passion.

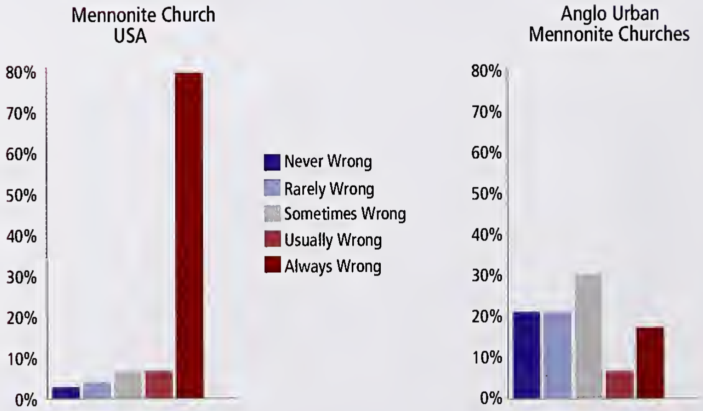
Why are these congregations growing? I interviewed the pastors of the surveyed congregations to find out what they thought were the reasons for their growth. All of them indicated that they are growing because they emphasize Anabaptism. Not only are Mennonites, who are migrating to the cities, looking for congrega-

How important is promoting social justice in the world in your personal faith commitments?



1.8%	Not Important at All	0.2%
18.6%	Not Very Important	5.5%
50.6%	Fairly Important	33.3%
29.1%	Very Important	61.0%

Homosexual relations between consenting adults:



2.7%	Never Wrong	21.5%
4.0%	Rarely Wrong	21.5%
7.8%	Sometimes Wrong	31.2%
6.8%	Usually Wrong	7.8%
78.7%	Always Wrong	17.9%

tions with strong Anabaptist teachings, but so are non-Mennonites who are tired of churches that ride the nationalistic bandwagon.

Within evangelical, mainline and Catholic Christian circles there is a growing movement (sometimes called the emerging church) that is embracing peacemaking, social justice, ecology, community, egalitarianism, a simple lifestyle, creative spirituality and following Jesus. For these people, urban Mennonite churches are often exactly what they are looking for.

Anglo-urban Mennonite congregations are translating Anabaptist beliefs into fresh language and images and applying them to urban concerns such as race, poverty and sexual orientation. Flip-boards, self-published booklets, special classes and creative Web sites challenge and inform newcomers about Anabaptist ideas and commitments, while the cultural markers of Mennonitism (such as focusing on who you are related to or using "insider language") are downplayed. The focus is more on clarity than certainty—being clear about what they are committed to without rejecting or condemning all other approaches.

These congregations seek connections among their members without being rigid, being resilient but also loose. As one pastor put it, his congregation holds together vision and playfulness. Meaningful worship is central for Anglo-urban congregations, and so there is often an emphasis on creativity and the use of visual arts. Some congregations maintain a strong commitment to four-part a cappella singing, while others are experimenting with new music forms. Frequently pastors told me that young adults are given leadership and are not segregated from the older adults.

From this survey and the follow-up interviews it is clear to me that urban and suburban areas are good ground for Anabaptism and rich soil for the future of Mennonite Church USA. Congregations in these environments have strong growth potential and will help keep our denomination's commitment to Anabaptism alive and vibrant. Together with the racial-ethnic congregations, the Anglo-urban congregations will represent a growing part of our future. For these reasons, conferences and the denomination should be actively planting more of these distinctively Anabaptist congregations in urban and suburban areas.—*Ryan Ahlgrim is the pastor of First Mennonite Church of Indianapolis.*

Interview with Mennonite World Conference's leader

Danisa Ndlovu says working for peace doesn't mean being a weakling.

Danisa Ndlovu, the Mennonite World Conference's newly-elected president, is not new to MWC. Though he started his term of presidency in July 2009 at MWC's general assembly in Paraguay, he had served as vice president since 2003.

Neither is Ndlovu new to the Christian church. He has served in various capacities and ministries within the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe: as an evangelist, bookstore manager, Bible school lecturer and since 2000 as bishop to the BICC in Zimbabwe, which has about 37,000 members.

And he is not new to North America. While some of his undergraduate studies were done in Zimbabwe and Kenya, he studied at two seminaries in the United States from 1989 to 1992, emerging with M.A. (theology) and M.Div. degrees.

Role as president? "My role...is to drive the ship." It is to see that the vision of MWC is pursued, to work closely with others and "to give MWC a face," he says.

North-South changes? The churches from the North and South need to move from a mother-daughter relationship to come to the table as equals, he says. This change is not easy, but it is important. There needs to be accountability, listening to each other, an openness both to being critiqued and acknowledging the pains of history.

Future assemblies: The South does not want to extend intervals between general assemblies because it would lose a sense of family, Ndlovu says. "The approaches … are different: the South is more relational, the North is more scientific." The global recession has affected many people, and "we cannot be overly spiritual about it, but finances are not the final thing. The issue is, What have we done with what we have to nurture the relationship?" he asks.

The unconvinced: What if people question if it is worthwhile to be part of MWC? Ndlovu says that "if you have a fruit in front of you, you really don't know how it tastes until you have tasted it." MWC is a fruit [with] a global family flavor that is unique. … When you participate, you begin to see the benefit."

> We need to 'plant' our lives in each other and put down our defensive mechanisms.—Danisa Ndlovu

The church coming together from different nations and languages is biblical, Ndlovu says. "There is a benefit to cross-fertilization. We need to 'plant' our lives in each other and put down our defensive mechanisms as the people of God."

BICC in Zimbabwe: The bishop says the church in Zimbabwe has grown in a period of political and economic crisis and "has sought to be faithful before God in very difficult times." But, he says, the BICC is "not standing on its own." He says that through this crisis, the church has learned the "importance of walking alongside Christians of other denominations—Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, evangelicals. … The BICC has played a role in this as a peace church."

The BICC cannot "sit back" but needs to "take the driving seat." He speaks of suffering and Scripture, convinced that God sometimes allows pain "to nurture the best out of you."

Message of peace: Since the Ndebele, who live in Zimbabwe, are linked to the Zulu, and both have reputations as brave warriors, how has the message of peace through Jesus been received by the Ndebele and other Zimbabweans?

Danisa Ndlovu

Peace doesn't mean "being a weakling or allowing other people to walk over you," he says. "Peace is a principle of life where you are able to respond to situations in ways that enhance life, relationships and so forth."

The Ndebele have a history as warriors, but among themselves they are generally a peaceful people. Bravery and "warriorship" are in there to respond to challenges, he says.

Nonresistance is in the BICC's constitution, but "as a church we have not been up front, in my view, in teaching that," he says. Missionaries were not up front. If nonresistance had been taught when people were conscripted, it would have really helped a great deal.

During the war of liberation some BICC young men were forced into the army, but they were ill-equipped to face that challenge. There needs to be more teaching, says Ndlovu.

His family: Asked about his family, Ndlovu says Treziah, his wife, and their three children are supportive and very positive in the midst of the challenges they have experienced together economically. Two teenaged children are in boarding school; another, 20, awaits college. He and his family live with their extended family, which is a great joy, he says. Sadly, a younger brother, married and preparing for ministry, died suddenly last October.—*Terry Smith, executive secretary of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference and editor of* The Messenger

Former sex workers learn new job skills

Mennonite Central Committee Bangladesh created program for women.

The decision to become a sex worker in Bangladesh is almost always one of desperation. Piya was forced into a marriage with an unfaithful man. Disowned and beaten by her father after she divorced her husband, Piya tried making money by sorting through trash and giving blood until she became too ill. Eventually she began sex work because it gave her a reasonable income, even though it led her into many abusive relationships.

Mitu's husband from an arranged marriage was a drug addict, who also gambled and misused alcohol. He beat her and offered no financial support. After a tumultuous four-year relationship with him, she resorted to sex work to support herself and her son and daughter.

Asha was raped by a neighbor and then beaten by her mother because she was raped. Asha escaped to her uncle's house, where she was raped again. After much pleading, Asha was allowed back home, but she was so filled with rage and frustration she turned to sex work for three years.

As desperate as they were, these women were not willing to accept the role that society assigned sex workers—despised and scorned, with no hope of redemption. They wanted a job with dignity, even if it meant they didn't earn as much money.

With the encouragement of Shourav Nari Kallyan Shongha, an organization that helps women within the trade, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Bangladesh created an alternative job-training program for sex workers in March 2008. Piya, Mitu and Asha were among the first 26 women accepted into the eight-month program. Their names have been changed for their safety.

Austin Miller

Former sex workers in Bangladesh add lemon essential oil to a soap mixture. They will sell the soap through Sacred Mark, an enterprise established by MCC Bangladesh to give the women a new way to earn an income.

The program, called Pobitra, means "holiness, sanctity, the fresh cleanliness of a newborn." The name was intended "to remind the women that they were not bound to labels of 'dirty,' 'filthy' or 'spoiled,'" says Robin Seyfert, an MCC worker from Salem, Ore., who is in charge of MCC Bangladesh's health education and social services programs, including Pobitra.

To become part of Pobitra, the women made a public commitment to stop sex work and embrace the new opportunities in the program. Bita Barua oversees the program, and Nipa Dutta is the training supervisor. Both are MCC staff members.

> They ... began to look younger as renewed innocence replaced ... abuse and pain.—Robin Seyfert

Each woman was given $1.50 per day, a caring environment, handicraft training and teaching about health and hygiene, mental health, human rights, peace and literacy, Seyfert says. Staff insisted that the women treat each other with respect, although that was not easy to learn.

"The early days were full of fights and threats," Seyfert says. "Often women had to be dragged apart and kept separate until they cooled off. They used to fight to survive on the street, and they didn't remember any other way."

However, this changed over time. "The hard lines on their faces gradually softened," Seyfert says. "They literally began to look younger as renewed innocence replaced the look of one who's seen too much abuse and pain ... they became quick to support and share with one another."

As the women changed, sometimes their families changed, too. Pobitra offered abuse prevention training for spouses. Mitu's husband took the class and, according to Seyfert, has taken a pledge not to abuse Mitu anymore and has stopped most of his addictive behavior.

After eight months of training the women were ready to start full-time work. The majority began producing handmade, natural soaps at Sacred Mark, an enterprise developed by MCC Bangladesh. Piya and Asha are among them.

Piya enjoys mixing and cutting soap, but she still struggles to provide for her two daughters. Her 7-year-old is in boarding school. Piya hopes her daughter will one day be able to manage an enterprise like Sacred Mark.

Two weeks after joining Sacred Mark, Asha got married. Her in-laws are now insisting that she quit working, but Asha loves her work and is refusing to leave.—*Linda Espenshade of Mennonite Central Committee*

Forgiveness in the Balkans

Eastern Mennonite Mission worker witnesses reconciliation at milk co-op.

One day last September, when Hasan* and Mike* had finished testing and receiving milk at the community milk co-op, a new customer pulled up to the building. Mike is an Eastern Mennonite Missions worker.

As he walked toward the door to enter the center, Hasan turned suddenly and disappeared into the lab at the back of the building.

"Can you handle the new customer?" Mike, unsure of himself in the local language, called after Hasan. But Hasan didn't appear.

Puzzled, Mike met the new farmer and managed to talk him through the process, welcoming him to bring milk to the co-op. Several more farmers arrived, and Mike momentarily forgot Hasan's strange disappearance.

Then he got a call from Ferhat,* the local co-op manager, inviting him out for coffee. Over coffee Ferhat explained Hasan's strange disappearance. There was a longstanding "blood feud" between Hasan's extended family and the new customer's family. Four years ago, Hasan's uncle had been attacked and stabbed by a member of the new customer's family. Although the uncle hadn't died, he had been permanently disabled.

Under a centuries-old code of honor, Hasan's extended family is obligated to revenge the deed or they eternally shame the injured uncle and the entire family. Hasan had asked Ferhat if the milk center could refuse to accept milk from the new customer, minimizing his need to interact with and assist his family's enemy.

I knew I was in way over my head—talking about blood feuds and generational curses—but I knew I wanted to say something.

But as Mike and Ferhat talked they agreed they should not stop the man from bringing milk, and decided to talk further with Hasan.

After the three met for further discussion, Mike says, "It was a remarkable time of sitting with these two guys—Ferhat and Hasan. On the one hand, I knew I was in way over my head—talking about blood feuds and generational curses. But on the other hand, I knew I wanted to say something. I felt a lot like Moses, thinking, 'God, what can I possibly say?'"

As Mike listened to Hasan, he entered the pain Hasan still feels for his uncle, the desire he has that justice be done. From Hasan's point of view, revenge is about justice. It makes more sense than forgiveness, which is a sign of weakness.

Mike says, "I told Hasan that God is the one who will carry out justice. Because of Jesus, God has forgiven us, and he asks us to forgive others who have wronged us. He gives us the power to forgive."

Mike encouraged Hasan to stand up to his relatives and encourage the family to forgive, to move on without seeking revenge.

"They'd never agree to that," Hasan countered.

Mike said, "Think of your wife, Saraya,* and your three little ones. Go home tonight, look at them, hug them and consider how they need you. If you take revenge, you may well be saying goodbye to the four who are nearest and dearest to you."

Before the men parted that night, they agreed they would not limit who brings milk to the center, but if the new customer came to the center again, Hasan would be excused from dealing with him. They reiterated that the co-op is committed to working for reconciliation among all peoples and saying no to violence and revenge.

Already the next morning the resolution was put to the test. The new customer showed up. Mike quickly excused Hasan, but to Mike's surprise Hasan responded, "I will stay. I can do this."

As Hasan and Mike worked with the farmer to test and receive the milk, the two local men never spoke to each other. Tension hung heavy in the air.

When the customer left, Hasan told Mike he had surprised himself that he'd been able to stay in the room and interact without initiating revenge.

Mike told him, "This is what God can do, if we ask him."

Later Mike said, "These last few days we've seen small but significant steps in our hopes and prayers to see people here transformed and reconciled to God and others."

The Eastern Mennonite Missions team in the Balkans, in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Missions, owns and operates the milk co-op.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

**Names have been changed.*

Church building in Thailand offers visibility

Living Water Church is located among many Buddhist temples in Borabu.

For the people of Thailand, the presence of a church building makes the Christian faith more visible, say Pat and Rad Houmphan, leaders of the Living Water Church in Borabu.

And that visibility gives Christianity a new significance.

As joint workers with Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network, the Houmphans are engaged in long-term, holistic Christian ministry within a culture that is intricately connected to Buddhism. More than 200 villages populate the Borabu district, and most of those villages have Buddhist temples that serve as central gathering places.

Before the Living Water Church was erected in 2007, the congregation met in homes or rented spaces. Without a building, Christianity was deemed unimportant by the surrounding community. "For the Thai people, there was a lacking of something," Rad says.

But having a church building in Borabu has made a difference. "From time to time, a nonbeliever from [a] surrounding area or town comes in to see what a Christian church looks like," says Pat. Although the new church building has caught the attention of the local community, many trials still exist for Christians in Borabu.

Thai Christians face discrimination and isolation from within their communities. Houmphan maintains that it takes about five years for a new Christian to become fully rooted in faith.

The Houmphans know that one day they will leave their mission work in Borabu. For the church to become independent, the Houmphans not only work on developing leaders but on creating means for financial self-sufficiency in an economically challenged community.

A local cow-lending project loans church-owned cows to members who can breed the cow three times. They can keep the second- and third-born calves, but the first-born calf and the cow are returned to the project to enable another family to reap the same benefits.

Living Water Church also has a 40-ton storage building for rice. They purchase rice from local farmers at harvest and then hold it to sell later on in the season when rice supplies fall and the price rises. Profits from this venture go to support the church budget.—*Deborah Froese of Mennonite Church Canada*

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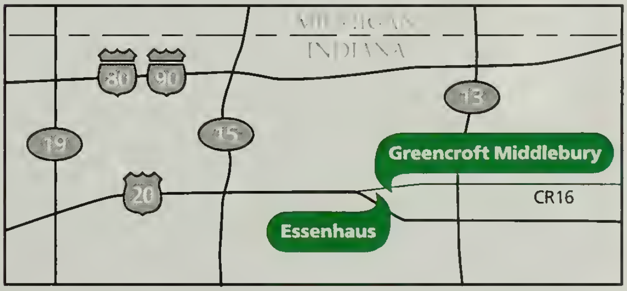

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Living in a world of war and injustice

Message of historian and ethicist Guy F. Hershberger still resonates today

In the turbulent scene of human history that was the 20th century, historian and ethicist Guy Hershberger was a leading light for American Mennonites, never giving up his patient and persistent efforts at living and refining biblical pacifism.

Born in 1896, Hershberger lived through the major cataclysms of the 20th century—two world wars, the Cold War and the struggle for civil rights in the United States. Against that backdrop, the author of the seminal 1944 book *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* sought to show how Christians might live in a world beset by war and injustice.

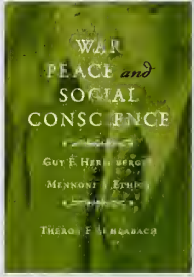
Over the long length of his career, his thought and emphases grew and changed. But what never changed were a number of deep and enduring convictions that provided guidelines for his life—convictions that can still provide guidance for Christians today.

1. Christians are called to be faithful in life and practice. The frame for that conviction was the "Anabaptist vision," which was articulated by his colleague Harold S. Bender. Hershberger's abiding accomplishment was to make that frame practical in ways large and small, translating faith into the patterns of daily life.

2. Being faithful means being guided earnestly and directly by the Bible and its ethical teachings, especially the teachings of the New Testament. For Hershberger, Jesus' example and teachings were central, but the rest of Scripture was also important.

3. The goal of being faithful is to give witness. Faithful Christians, he said, offer alternatives to the ways and the evils of the world and point forward to the reign of God.

4. Witness must be the task of the whole church, not just individuals or advocacy groups within the church.



5. The church operates in its own ethical realm. While Hershberger's main emphasis and contribution was to call his church and other Christians to the social implications of the gospel, he stood squarely on a "two-kingdom" principle that ran through Mennonite history and thought.

6. The church should engage the world, not withdraw from it. Hershberger grew up at a time when his church used the language of separation and nonconformity as a way to disengage from the surround society. He valued those concepts, but his overriding goal was for the church to be engaged in the world to present Jesus' message.

7. The message of peace is a way for the church to exercise its social responsibility in the world. For him, pacifism was a way to bring wellness to all of society.

8. The means Christians use to promote God's kingdom must be as biblical and godly as the ends they are seeking. In addition to rejecting violence, Hershberger was skeptical about using coercion. For him, this included most strikes, boycotts and demonstrations or confrontations.

9. Christians should live their lives to do the will of God, to be disciples of Jesus the Christ and to build up the body of Christ, the church.

These lifelong principles formed a coherent and consistent whole for Hershberger, an integrated system of personal commitment, church and ethics. They are not above questions and critique, and they have been and will continue to be expanded upon. But through his life and principles, Hershberger has much to teach those of us living today—a time when similar states of chaos and upheaval and violence can be seen every day in the news.—*Theron Schlabach, author of* War, Peace, and Social Conscience: The Life and Thought of Guy F. Hershberger *(Herald Press), from which this article was adapted. For more information, visit www.mpn.net/hershberger*

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Burkholder, Ada Zuercher, 87, Orrville, Ohio, died Nov. 26, 2009. Spouse: Elvin Burkholder. Parents: Isaac and Emma Lehman Zuercher. Children: Luella Stiner, Glenn, Milan; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville.

Danner, Neva Mae Stutzman, 89, Streetsboro, Ohio, died Oct. 29, 2009, of a stroke. Spouse: David Danner (deceased). Parents: John A. and Mary A. Plank Stutzman. Children: David W., Robert D.; seven grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 2 at Aurora Mennonite Church, Aurora, Ohio.

Eash, Dorcas Ruth Miller, 81, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 14, 2009. Spouse: Edwin Eash (deceased). Parents: Lee and Ruth Troyer Miller. Children: Rebecca Whitmore, Glen, Karen Hicks, Philip, Don, Leon, Myron, Paul; 18 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Friesen, Elvin, 92, Altona, Manitoba, died Sept. 26, 2009. Parents: Henry J. and Helena Nickel Friesen. Children: Lorraine Hamm, Garry, Kelly Lambrecht, Sheila; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Gisel, Fannie Elizabeth Short, 94, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 5, 2009. Spouse: Vern Gisel (deceased). Parents: Amandus and Malinda Aeschliman Short. Children: Nadine Leithauser, Carol Short, Bettilu Fraas, Ned, LaMar; 11 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 9 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Godshall, Mildred Hendricks Derstine, 89, Lansdale, Pa., died Nov. 17, 2009, of end stage Parkinson's Disease. Spouse: Curtis D. Godshall (deceased). Parents: Irvin and Mamye Hendricks Derstine. Children: Glenda Landis, Mary Miller, Helen Goshow, Gerry Fix, Joyce Telenko; 15 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Graber, Glen Daniel, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 7, 2009. Spouse: June Mable Straite Graber (deceased). Parents: Daniel S. and Anna Marie Widmer Graber. Children: Lowell Daniel, Vinnie Marie Graber, Kathryn Louise Myers, David Glen; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Eicher Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Washington County, Iowa.

Harley, Paul Lockart, 96, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 29, 2009. Spouse: Thelma Mae Wenger Harley. Parents: Isaiah B. and Ida L. Harley. Children: John W., Paul D., Kathleen M. Aeschliman; eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Kupeerus, Elizabeth "Betty" C. Clemmer, 84, Milford, Ind., died Oct. 28, 2009. Spouse: Sjoerd Kupeerus. Children: Gerald; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Mishler-Eastlund Funeral Home, Milford.

Landis, Emma Alderfer, 90, Lansdale, Pa., died Nov. 21, 2009. Parents: Elias and Sallie Alderfer Landis. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Martin, Leah Rudy, 90, Elmira, Ontario, died Oct. 30, 2009. Spouse: Philip S. Martin (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Sarah Martin Rudy. Children: Alvin, Aaron, Naomi de'Rozario, Armand, Vera Martin, Elma Freed, Margaret Fisher, Nora Martin, Herb, Omar; 27 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Moyer, Evelyn Scholl, 88, Hatfield, Pa., died Nov. 18, 2009. Spouse: Marcus M. Moyer. Parents: Earl and Mabel Shisler Scholl. Children: Linda Fox, Donna Styer; four grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at Huff and Lajker, Lansdale, Pa.

Nafziger, Vernon M., 77, Lowville, N. Y., died Nov. 2, 2009. Spouse: Maxine Widrick Nafziger. Parents: Menno and Marie Jantzi Nafziger. Children: Stephen, Lori Snyder; nine grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.

Nafziger, Marjorie M. Wyse, 89, Wauseon, Ohio, died Nov. 27, 2009. Spouse: Lester Nafziger. Parents: William and Dinah Roth Wyse. Children: Leslie, Suzanne Schrock, Karen Rupp, Thomas, Michael, Lonnie; 14 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Noftsier, Anna Mae Roes, 69, Croghan, N.Y., died Oct. 31, 2009. Spouse: Grant Noftsier (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Lena Roes. Children: Randy, Bonnie Zehr, Cynthia Zehr, Judy Zehr; 11 granchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Croghan Mennonite Church.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite. org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Nyce, Miriam L. Moyer, 95, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 23, 2009. Spouse: Henry F. Nyce (deceased). Spouse: J. Warren Moyer (deceased). Parents: Irwin and Anna Overholdt Moyer. Children: Kenneth M. Moyer, Clare Moyer, Carolyn Speakerman, David Nyce, Janice Deonarine, Deborah Walker; step-children: Nancy Bergey, Robert Nyce, Henry Nyce; 27 grandchildren; 42 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Rotenberger, Laura A. Shelly, 80, Quakertown, Pa., died Nov. 2, 2009, of cancer. Spouse: Norman R. Rotenberger. Parents: Raymond and Rebecca Rice Shelly. Children: Mark R., Neal R., Olin D., Perry C., LouAnn Newman; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown.

Roth, Joyce M., 76, Topeka, Ind., died Dec. 5, 2009. Parents: Daniel and Susie Miller Roth. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka.

Sala, Dorothy "Lena" Thomas, 81, Davidsville, Pa., died Nov. 17, 2009, of complications from Calciphylaxis. Spouse: Ammon Sala, Jr. Parents: Owen W. and Stella Saylor Thomas. Children: Linda Baumgardner, James; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa.

Scarff, Ryan P., 37, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, died Nov. 3, 2009. Parents: Ron Ray and Wendy Marlene Slagel Scarff. Funeral: Nov. 8 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Schlabach, Retha Fern Miller, 79, Winesburg, Ohio, died Nov. 6, 2009, of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Daniel D. Schlabach (deceased). Parents: Daniel P. and Mildred Marie Miller Miller. Children: David, Bradley, James, Brenda Schlabach Sweany; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 9 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg.

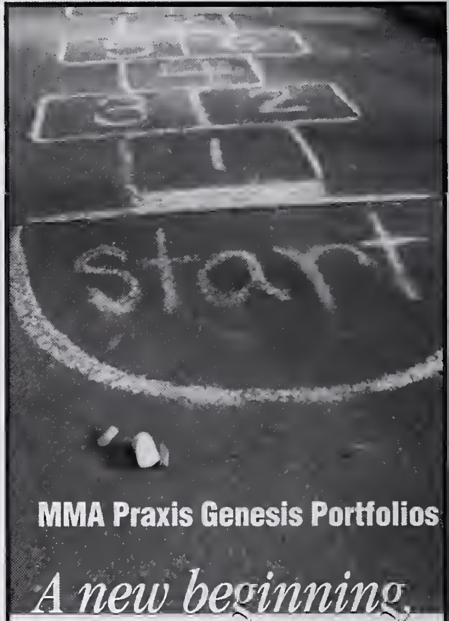
Schmidt, Elmer Ernest, 93, Reedley, Calif., died Nov. 12, 2009. Spouse: Evangeline Unruh Schmidt (deceased). Spouse: Lucille Johnson Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Herman Franz and Anna Ewert Schmidt. Children: Karen Yingst, Annalee Compton-Schmidt, Galen, Sherryl Dyck, James, Deborah Cornich; 15 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Sierra View Homes Retirement Center, Reedley.

Snyder, M. Grant, 57, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Nov. 26, 2009, of cancer. Spouse: Pam Schlitt Snyder. Parents: Melvin and Norine Sheerer Snyder. Children: Amanda Snyder Araujo, Emily Snyder Roe. Funeral: Dec. 2 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Naomi K. Kauffman Smoker, 90, Gap, Pa., died Nov. 26, 2009, of coronary artery disease. Spouse: Levi U. Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Fannie Kauffman Smoker. Children: Esther M. Stoltzfus, Erma M. Kurtz, Kenneth L., Allen R., Wilmer J., Fannie E. Bowman; 15 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Tucker, Martha E. Schlabach, 87, Elida, Ohio, died Nov. 10, 2009. Spouse: Gerald Tucker (deceased). Parents: Lorenzo and Polly Miller Schlabach. Children: Harold, Loren, Gloria Weldy; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida.

Yoder, Orvilla A. Weaver, 92, Berlin, Ohio, died Nov. 18, 2009. Spouse: Delmer Yoder (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Barbara Kandel Weaver. Children: Doyle, Janice Carlson, Karen Kaser, Eileen Yoder; six grandchildren; 4 step-grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; numerous step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio.



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Bluffton University invites applications and nominations for the position of ***vice president for fiscal affairs*** to begin summer 2010. The person in this position reports to the president as a member of the university's senior leadership team and functions as the university's chief financial officer. Responsibilities include annual operating and capital budgeting, long-term financial planning and analysis, capital acquisition and investment strategy, legal affairs, annual audits and internal financial controls. The position supervises staff in business office, human resources, physical plant and information technology. An MBA and/or CPA or equivalent plus experience in financial administration and supervision is required. See http://www.bluffton.edu/about/employment/ for information and application details. Applications will be reviewed as received until the position is filled. EOE.

Hesston College seeks a ***development officer*** as member of team responsible for fund-raising for annual fund, capital campaigns and endowment. Qualifications include integrity, relational skills, marketing mentality, passion for the mission of Hesston College and knowledge of the Mennonite church. Background in fund-raising and/or marketing with bachelor's degree in relevant field preferred. Reports to the VP of Advancement. To apply send resumé, application and faith statement to Yvonne Sieber, VP of Advancement, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062 or email yvonnes@hesston.edu. Visit www.hesston.edu/employment for more information. EOE.

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Where faith and culture intersect

Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz is a member of San Antonio Mennonite Church.

One morning, when I had a rare moment alone, away from my three young boys—ages 4, 3 and 1—and my husband of seven years, I reflected on where my faith and ethnicity have intersected. I chose to be a Mennonite after having left a more fundamentalist-leaning church. Before that, I left the Roman Catholic Church.

I also considered how I've begun to fully embrace the biculturalism of being raised in a home that fostered both Mexican and American values. I thought about the geographical crossroads where my faith has arrived now that we have chosen San Antonio, Texas, as our home. We fellowship and serve in two different Mennonite communities: San Antonio Mennonite Church and Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida. I pictured those in my mind who embody what I've come to understand as historical, Germanic Mennonites with all their traditions and peculiarities. At the same time it was easy for me to compare this group with the community of people I've longed to connect with—people like me, who hold these characteristics: second-generation Mexican-American immigrant, converted Mennonite Christian, passionate, purpose-driven, lover of Jesus, beautiful Latino/as. I shed tears of mourning. Feelings of loneliness and confusion overtook me as I considered how different I am—how I'm outside those who are born into the cultural Mennonite profile and who behave according to the cultural Mennonite norm. I feared that in some ways the church I've chosen and grown to love for its beliefs and discipleship will never quite understand me or speak to me as a whole person.

> I invite Germanic Mennonites to broaden the depth of trust they have in the power of the gospel.

I thought about how my initial longing was just to fit in, but my ethnicity speaks up and tells me I don't really want to fit in or, in other words, become any less of who God has made me to be. I want to belong without apologizing for who I am.

I felt haunted by wondering if I will ever have shared ownership of or shared responsibility within my faith community. I felt gripped with grief. How do I define myself as a Mennonite when I don't perceive that I belong? Who has the authority to extend the identity of Mennonite to "outsiders"? Is this a decision I get to make, or does someone give it to me once I've jumped through the right hoops?

Historian Philip Hammond categorizes Mennonites as an "ethnic religion" whereby "ethnic identification can be claimed without claiming the religious identification, but the reverse is rare."

What I'm asking for from Germanic Mennonites is rare; I'm asking them to present a living faith divorced from their ethnicity so that people like me can find a home with them, and this faith can to speak to my culture as well.

Gilberto Flores, currently serving as associate conference minister of Western District Conference, wrote earlier this decade about the weakness and strength of sharing our Good News to all people of all cultures. It is a "weakness because it is made vulnerable by each encounter with a new reality, and a strength because it is enriched with each response to a new culture."

I can imagine the trepidation of those who hold on dearly to the Mennonite ethnicity for the sense of security, predictability and purposefulness that it has brought to their lives. Yet I can see an increased insecurity arise within them as they perceive their beloved faith becoming vulnerable as it encounters new realities among Latinos.

What does it mean, and what would it look like for the larger Mennonite reality to be predominately minority and/or Latino? I invite Germanic Mennonites to broaden the depth of trust that they have in the power of the gospel and that its message of peace and service will not be lost among us "foreigners" who have embraced this message.

At the same time, my hope is that this gospel is strengthened because it has touched our lives and has transformed itself in greater ways into a relevant, living word that ripples throughout our community and to others, making evident the kingdom of God on this earth.

My vision of our mutual embrace of Jesus and our walk together calms my confusion and gives me hope that we will all have one faith to call our own.

FILM REVIEWS

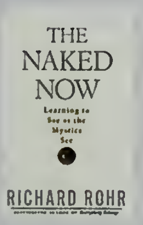
Invictus (PG-13), Clint Eastwood's latest film, shows newly elected Nelson Mandela's support of the South African rugby team to bring unity to the country. The examples of Mandela's leadership and the exciting rugby scenes are powerful; otherwise the film settles into an above average sports movie. It gets off to a slow start and misses opportunities throughout to explain the transformation of the rugby captain. —*Anna Groff*

An Education (PG-13) is a coming-of-age story about a teenage girl in 1960s suburban London and how her life changes with the arrival of a playboy nearly twice her age. The script is smart and the acting outstanding, particularly Carey Mulligan as the girl. The story's turnabout is no surprise but well played. The film raises a good question: What is education for?—*Gordon Houser*

DVD REVIEW

Goodbye Solo (unrated) tells a simple story that resonates on many levels. Solo, a Senegalese man living in Winston-Salem, N.C., picks up William, an older white Southerner who wants to pay him hundreds of dollars to take him to a spot in the mountains. Solo is relentlessly optimistic and friendly and tries to talk William out of what appears to be a suicide wish. A mysterious grace pervades this film.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEW



The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See by Richard Rohr (Crossroad, 2009, $19.95) explores the mystical traditions of Christianity that most Christians have lost sight of. Rohr draws on Scripture to prod readers into "a nondualistic way of seeing the moment," both-and rather than either-or. "How you love," he writes, "is how you have accessed Love."—*gh*

Faith and fiction in Dostoevsky

What do we have to learn from a 19th-century Russian nationalist who was a gambling addict and spent time in a Siberian prison for political dissent?

Let's add that this Russian is considered one of the world's greatest writers and wrote one of the greatest novels ever, *The Brothers Karamazov.*

According to Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Cantebury, this man, Fyodor Dostoevsky, wrote about terrorism, child abuse, absent fathers and the fragmentation of the family, the secularization of culture and other anxieties we face today. Yet his novels "insistently and unashamedly press home the question of what else might be possible if we—characters and readers—saw the world in another light, the light provided by faith."

Williams' book *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (Baylor University Press, 2009, $24.95) is a scholarly work. It's a difficult read and will not be appearing on any best-seller lists.

However, the book has insights important to people of faith, and Williams, an outstanding theologian as well as a student of Dostoevsky, is an excellent guide.

As his title indicates, Williams looks at the meanings of language, faith and fiction. He also shows how these connect in Dostoevsky.

This book is part of a series called "The Making of the Christian Imagination," and Williams in his introduction to the series notes the ways imagination and faith connect. Any system of perceiving and receiving the world depends on imagination, Williams writes.

Further, he writes, "the forming of a corporate imagination is something that continues to be the more or less daily business of religious believers." And this is a sophisticated process. We don't simply repeat dogmas; we seek ways to apply our faith to daily realities. This requires imagination.

Fiction is certainly an arena of imagination. And Dostoevsky's fiction shows "the interdependence between human freedom and human language and imagination," Williams writes.

Both faith and fiction involve free linguistic responses. Faith is a response to the freedom of the creator, and what Williams calls "the gratuity of fiction" arises "from the conviction that no kind of truth can be told if we speak or act as if history is over."

In other words, fiction does not present simple answers in a closed system. It shows characters interacting freely. Anything can happen.

And faith is not locked into some deterministic plot. We interact with a world of possibilities.

Williams even calls the novel "a statement of 'nonviolence,' of radical patience with the unplanned and undetermined decisions of agents."

People have viewed Dostoevsky in various ways: as a staunch Russian Orthodox believer who wants Russia to be a theocracy, as an unbeliever who holds up religion to ridicule, as an existentialist, as a disturbed writer of morose literature.

Williams shows him as more complex and more Christian than some have thought. Contrary to some critics, he is not writing to argue for or against God's existence. Rather, he is concerned about the context from which we derive values.

Williams writes: "The world without the sacred is not just disenchanted but deprived of some kind of depth." We cannot learn to be human subjects of God's creation without faith. TM

Gordon Houser, associate editor of The Mennonite

THE PERSON WHO PUZZLES OUR READERS

Jeanette Baer Showalter was born and raised in the Denbigh area of Newport News, Va. Her roots there run deep as her great-great-grandfather was among the original settlers of the Mennonite colony formed on the banks of the Warwick River in 1897. Jeanette is one of two children born to Nelson and Kathryn Baer and was raised in the Warwick River Mennonite congregation.

Jeanette graduated from the College of William and Mary in Virginia in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in anthropology and philosophy and studies in Russian language.

She then attended Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary, graduating in 1989 with a doctor of jurisprudence degree. She has practiced law in Newport News for the past 20 years, currently serving her clients in the area of estate planning.

Jeanette is married to Lynn E. Showalter, an engineer in Newport News. They have two children: a teenaged daughter, Ingrid, and a preteen son, Grant. She and her family are active members of the Warwick River Mennonite Church, which still hosts many families descended from the original settlers of the Colony.

In 1990, Jeanette became a board member of Mennowood Retirement Community, serving for 12 years and as president of the corporation for the last five of those years. During her time on the board, Mennowood Retirement Community expanded from an independent living facility to an assisted living facility with two multi-storied buildings added to the site. She continues to feel a strong desire to provide for the seniors of the community and promote these ministries.

Jeanette has always had a fascination for puzzles and describes herself as "devoted to words and in particular to the Word." It naturally followed that she would apply her knowledge to fun activities based on the Bible.

"Doing the puzzles is a Bible study for me," Jeanette says. "It gives me a chance to find new things in God's Word and share it with others who also thirst for Bible knowledge."

In 1999, Jeanette began writing articles and stories for the *Warwick River Tide*, a digest for the area Mennonite churches, and soon after she created crossword puzzles to challenge *Tide* readers. In 2001, she began submitting crossword puzzles for the new *OurFaith Digest* and word search puzzles for *Together* magazine in 2002. She continues to submit puzzles to both *Together* and *Living* magazines. Jeanette is also excited to begin puzzles for *The Mennonite* and hopes her crossword puzzles will appeal to a wide range of people who enjoy Bible games. TM

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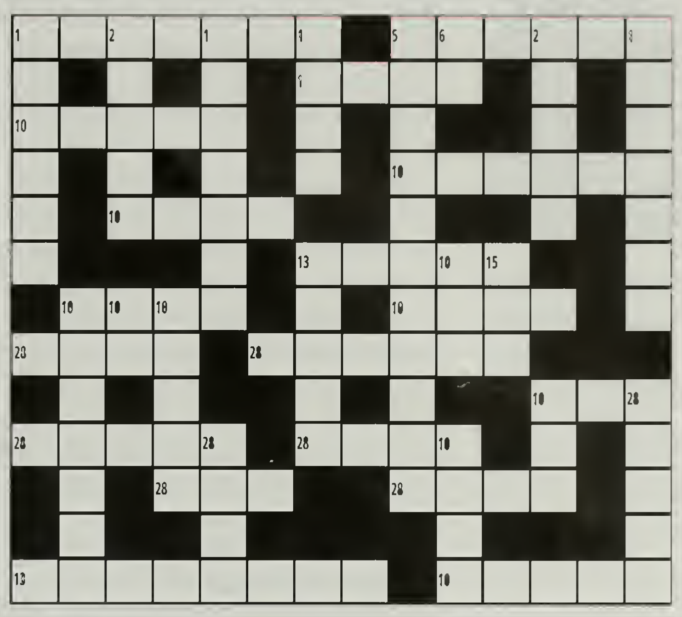
A trip through Genesis

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. She gave Isaac's servant a drink and offered to water his camels from the well.
5. The first of this crime was committed by a son of Adam.
9. A descendant of Noah through Shem; he was a son of Shelah and the father of Peleg – all in the genealogy of Christ.
10. Unit of measure used for the ark; approximately 18 inches. KJV
11. Grandson of Noah and a son of Ham.
12. God sent a ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac at this place, which Abraham named "The ____ Will Provide", Jehovah-jireh in the KJV. Gen. 22.
13. God created vegetation to grow on the land on the ____ day.
16. Son of Adam in the ancestry of Christ.
19. Lot went to this "little" city that God spared when he destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim. Gen. 14 and 19.
20. A King of Sodom. (see above reference)
21. "You are free to eat from any ____ __ the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil …" (2 words)
22. In his dream Pharaoh saw seven cows, sleek and ___, eaten up by seven ugly and gaunt cows. Gen. 41.
24. A son of Midian and a grandson of Abraham. Gen. 25:4.
26. When Jacob was born he was grasping this part of Esau.
28. Esau was ___ and hairy at birth.
29. Abimelech held this title.
30. Jacob saw this in his dream at Bethel. Gen. 28.
31. One of only two men taken directly to heaven by God without experiencing death.

DOWN

1. Her maidservant was Bilhah.
2. Tower of _____.
3. She bore to Abraham six sons (Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah).
4. "Laban said, 'This ____ is a witness between you (Jacob) and me today … it was also called Mizpah …" Gen. 31.
5. King of Salem who blessed Abraham and praised God for him.
6. Abraham's native city.
7. Jacob's daughter.
8. God said, "I have set my ______ in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth." Gen. 9.
13. Father of Abraham.
14. Beer Lahai ____ —an angel appeared to Hagar at this well.
15. This son of Jacob is described as "a viper along the path . . ."
16. This animal was "more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made."
17. Judah's wicked firstborn son. Gen. 38.
18. The wife of number 17 down. She then became the wife of Judah's second son.
22. Leaves used as clothing in Eden.
23. Judah's description says "His eyes will be darker than wine, his _____ whiter than milk." Gen. 49
25. A childless Abraham was assured by God that "a son coming from your own body will be your ____." Gen. 15.
27. God breathed into Adam "the breath of ____."

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our March 2010 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46256.

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Blemished lambs at the altar

Marilyn Miller is a member of Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Fifty years ago, my youngest brother, David, was born with Down syndrome. That was in the late 1950s, a time when there was not a lot of knowledge and understanding about disabilities in the schools, the church or in society at large.

When it was time for child dedication, my mother was told that David could not be dedicated because the Scriptures say we should not bring a blemished lamb to the altar.

Dedication Sunday came, and all the other children went to the front of the church with their parents. As Mother sat in the back row, holding David and watching this service, tears from her eyes fell on David's face. At that moment he looked up at his mother and gave her a great big smile.

His smile was like a message from God: "It's OK. I welcome David to the altar of my heart, just as you welcome him in your heart. Though others, sometimes even the church, do not understand my unconditional love, your mother's heart does."

Mom relived and shared about that day at intervals in her life—and even nearly 50 years later, every time she told this story, she wept.

Pastor John Murray, as he spoke to our family at Mother's funeral, gave us a gift. He shared a new way of thinking about that event as he said: "I suppose there are many stories that could be told in relation to this point. But the one I share has touched me deeply. Clara dedicated her youngest child to the Lord in the most profound way that any mother can dedicate her child. She dedicated her child with her own tears. She could see the meaning and purpose of the special gift of David's life, even though there were others that were blind to that reality."

That day we experienced through the words John spoke and how he spoke them the church as a place of healing and reconciliation. We felt what the church is meant to portray—God's unconditional love, hospitality and grace.

When my sister, Bonnie Sowers, and I shared this story at the homecoming-dedication service of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church, one could hear a gasp go through the audience.

We responded: "As we look back at the David incident we may experience some shame and think, How could the church, the school and the culture of that day allow such a thing to happen? The fact that we wonder is a sign of progress. God continues to work in us, using our mistakes and imperfections to help us and our institutions practice a love that has more 'knowledge and depth of insight' (Philippians 1:9)."

Today I wonder how many other parents are sitting in their church pews with tears in their eyes and hearts because their children are not allowed full participation in the church. I wonder how many people have been scarred and hurt because we have not taken time to really listen to their stories and understand how God is working in their lives. Fifty years from now I wonder what our children and grandchildren will gasp about and say, "How could they do such a thing?"

Fifty years from now I wonder what our children and grandchildren will gasp about and say, 'How could they do such a thing?'

The older I get, the more aware I become of my own blemishes, both the things we name as sins and those we don't—such as keeping quiet when I sense in my heart that people are being treated unjustly. I ask for forgiveness and am thankful that my God welcomes me to the altar with all my blemishes. TM

Opinion

This column, entitled "Speaking Out" in previous volumes of *The Mennonite*, is a place for a reader to develop his or her message with more space than is possible in the Letters section. The disclaimer we regularly attach to this column applies to all content in the magazine: The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Extremists for love and justice

See, I am making all things new.—Revelation 21:5

From his jail cell in 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote a letter to religious leaders in Birmingham, Ala. They had criticized him for his part in a nonviolent protest against racial segregation in that city.

His "Letter from Birmingham Jail" became a turning point in our country's civil rights movement. That alone makes this letter important for us, because people of color are the primary reason for our church's growth.

But the letter's significance is also in King's words to his fellow Christian leaders. King says there was a time when the early church was powerful because Christians were joyfully willing to suffer for what they believed.

If the church does not recapture this sacrificial spirit of the early church, writes King, it loses its authenticity. Too often the church is weak, ineffectual and an arch defender of the status quo.

When Mennonite Church USA began, about nine years ago this month, we claimed a new vision for the church as well. "See, I am making all things new" was a bedrock text for the coming together of the two denominations. We believed God was ready to do a new thing among us. We had confidence in God's purpose for us.

Somewhere along the way, after the formation of Mennonite Church USA, the obstacles we faced became clearer. The Church Member Profile, a survey of our members, showed that our average age is older than most other churches and that we are basing more of our decisions on the norms of our culture than on the teachings of Christ.

We learned, too, that bringing together two different cultures—Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church—was more of a challenge than we had at first imagined.

What I am learning about the Revelation 21 text is that God is indeed making all things new. It is a continual process, not something completed quickly. With God's Spirit to guide us as Mennonite congregations, conferences and organizations, we are joining in what God is doing in the world.

We have not yet become a people thoroughly grounded in God's peace and justice or a community that sees itself as a sign of God's reign, but we are learning. We have not yet become a people who fully trust the Spirit's work among us or a community where the gifts of all are valued, but we are learning. We have not yet become a people known first for sharing God's good news with others or a community that values unity of the body of Christ over division, but we are learning.

Each January we celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. Among our elders are some who risked much to walk alongside King in his march for freedom and justice for all people. Where today can we join in this march for wholeness and justice? Will we continue hiding behind what King called the "anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows"*? Or are we ready to risk all that we have to joyfully follow Jesus into the world?

Somewhere along the way, after the formation of Mennonite Church USA, the obstacles we faced became clearer.

As King challenged readers in his Birmingham letter, we, too, must feel the call of Jesus to be extremists for love, truth and goodness. God is making all things new.

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

*Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," www.humanistictexts.org/king.htm.

Ron Byler will complete his assignment as acting executive director of Mennonite Church USA on Jan. 31.

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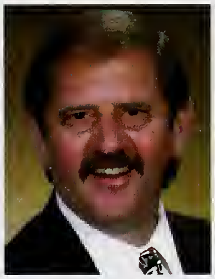

Everett J. Thomas

Leadership styles change when a congregation calls a new pastor. This is because no two leaders have the same dispositions, gifts and preparation for the role. The same is true for Mennonite Church USA; new executive director Ervin Stutzman's leadership will be different from Jim Schrag's. Just as with a pastoral change, some people will immediately embrace the change while others may not.

I have worked with both leaders over the years and know them well. Here is what the future may hold:

1. Ervin emerged from some of the most theologically conservative Anabaptist groups. Originally Beachy Amish and later ordained by the Conservative Mennonite Conference, Ervin rose to the moderator role in Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference and then dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va. Some may worry he is too far right of center, but Ervin has shown he can listen respectfully and then collaborate.

2. Ervin has experience managing large systems. Although he did spend some time pastoring and serves as a bishop, Ervin brings a successful track record as moderator of the largest conference in Mennonite Church USA (Lancaster) and as a vice president at Eastern Mennonite University.

3. Ervin knows what it is like to lead an area conference. Many denominational leaders have pointed out that since the formation of Mennonite Church USA in 2001, not enough attention has been given to the needs of districts and area conferences. The appointment of this former conference leader is an indication the search committees heard loud and clear the need for significant attention to district and conference needs in the future.

4. Ervin will bring some institutional memory to the task from the old Mennonite Church (MC). Although the four churchwide program boards—Mennonite Mission Network Mennonite Mutual Aid, Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Education Agency—inherited more from the old MC culture than from the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), the same has not been true of the Executive Board since its formation.

During its first five or six years, the Executive Board included several former GC leaders with strong influence, but it included virtually no MC memory from the premerger era. The contentious "one-board" proposal unveiled in 2008, in some ways, was a manifestation of these cultural differences (see also page 42). Those latent dynamics remain: 75 percent of Mennonite Church USA members are former MCs, and 25 percent are former GCs, although some congregations had dual membership.

5. Ervin will bring energy and extroversion to the executive director's office. It is apparent that he is eager to again get to know the broader church after his days as Mennonite Church USA moderator (2001-2003): He has asked his staff to schedule him to preach in as many congregations as possible when he travels to meetings. His extroversion was on display for us all last summer as he led the Convention 2009 delegates through the daily Dwelling in the Word Bible studies.

Those of us at *The Mennonite* will have early interaction with our new leader. He has agreed to join our annual board and staff retreat in April. By that time we will have some first impressions and know a bit more how the church may change under his leadership.

The gifts, disposition and preparation Ervin brings to the role will excite some of us and leave others apprehensive. This is normal for any leader, whether a new pastor or a new executive director.

We wish Ervin Stutzman the best and believe he is the leader God called to this role.—*ejt*

The gifts, disposition and preparation Ervin brings to the role will excite some of us and leave others apprehensive.

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The push and pull of faith

How a dyed-in-the-wool Catholic came to feel comfortable and welcomed in a Mennonite community

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INSIDE:
- Young adults: We stand amazed in their presence
- Suffering in the dark night
- Meditating on the run
- A pastor's plans
- Editorial: Almost Mennonite

You are cordially invited

I am the true vine, and my Father is
the vinegrower. He removes every
branch in me that bears no fruit.
Every branch that bears fruit he prunes
to make it bear more fruit. You have
already been cleansed by the word
that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as
the branch cannot bear fruit by itself
unless it abides in the vine, neither can
you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.
Those who abide in me and I in them
bear much fruit, because apart from
me you can do nothing.

—John 15: 1-5

The Executive Board and Staff
of Mennonite Church USA
invite you to

a celebration of worship
and the installation of

Ervin R. Stutzman

as Executive Director
of Mennonite Church USA

4:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 7, 2010
Park View Mennonite Church
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Harrisonburg, Virginia

Reception following

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ON THE COVER: Penelope Adams Moon photo by Vada Snider

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February 2010 | Volume 13, Number 2

The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

How to read the Bible

In his article "How to Read the Bible," (Dec. 1, 2009), Marion Deckert makes a plea for regaining confidence in the plain meaning of the text. Deckert outlines two approaches to the declining use of Scripture in our congregations: the rationalistic secular approach taken by the Jesus Seminar, which he rightly recognizes as possessing its own biases and problems, or a search for the literal intent of the writers of Scripture through textual scholarship. Deckert then concludes that it is hard to believe the text does not pretty much wear its central message on its sleeve.

The assumption that there is a plain and evident meaning to the biblical text is long behind us. Fortunately, there is a third alternative that Anabaptists have recognized since their beginnings and that Deckert has omitted: the work of the Holy Spirit through the gathered community of discernment.

When we study the Bible together, all of us—pastors, theologians, biblical scholars and ordinary people—we recognize that the Bible is a complicated, messy text whose meaning has been debated for 2,000 years. We also recognize that it does have authority over us and that it matters. The passionate debate, concern, sharing, challenge and affirmation that comes from the complicated wrestling with the text is the truly Mennonite way to read the Bible. Only in dialogue can the Spirit move us beyond our individualist interpretations to find what Scripture means for us today.*—Jeremy Garber, Denver*

A seventh membership change

Regarding the article "Hyattsville Church Denied ACC Membership" (January): I just wanted to highlight at least one other transfer beyond the six congregations listed in the article. Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Reinholds, Pa., transferred its membership from Eastern District Conference to Atlantic Coast Conference in April 2006. It was a significant loss for EDC but a cordial transfer, knowing it was the preference of Emmanuel membership to change its conference affiliation. EDC leaders conveyed blessing on the transfer taking place.*—Warren L. Tyson, ACC executive conference minister and EDC conference minister*

Another membership change

Everett Thomas may have missed one congregational transfer in the list of six in "Hyattsville Church Denied ACC Membership" (January).

Beaver Run Mennonite Church applied to Allegheny Mennonite Conference after being disciplined by Lancaster Mennonite Conference. It may not qualify, since it was actually removed from Lancaster Conference before applying to Allegheny Conference. But the same guidelines for conversations between conferences were followed.

Beaver Run Mennonite Church was accepted into "provisional" membership in Allegheny Conference with the same restrictions as those for Hyattsville but then failed to maintain viability as a congregation and never completed the membership process. *—Kurt Horst, Somerset, Pa.*

Could join a Baptist church

Thank you for publishing the research on Anglo Anabaptist congregations (News Analysis, January). I am an adult convert to the Mennonite tradition who first became a member at Portland Mennonite Church, one of the churches mentioned in the article.

When my husband, daughter and I moved to Virginia, one of the major factors that made us not choose to attend the closest Mennonite church was the congregation's irresolute stance on pacifism. We reasoned that if we had wanted to join a church whose distinctive features were anti-alcohol or anti-gay marriage, we could have joined the Baptist church. For us, what makes the Mennonite tradition unique is its commitment to peacemaking, an ethic that extends to vulnerability, dialogue and shared leadership.

We continue to affirm our membership with Portland Mennonite and look forward to joining a Mennonite Church USA congregation that fully affirms the historic Mennonite faith convictions.—*Melissa Bixler, Manassas, Va.*

War and abortion both violence

According to Ryan Ahlgrim's January article, "Anglo Anabaptist Congregations in the Cities are Growing," 72 percent of Anglo-urbans said peacemaking and nonviolence are very important in their personal faith commitments, and 88 percent of Anglo-urbans believe it is wrong for Christians to fight in any war. Yet only 10 percent of Anglo-urbans believe abortion is always wrong.

According to our confession of faith, war and abortion are both violent and against the will of God; this is the same position that was taken during the first three centuries of Christianity by every known Christian writer and theologian.

No one with a flexible attitude toward killing the innocent unborn can accurately be labeled nonviolent. Abortion is a form of murder; there is no room for disagreement on this issue.—*Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

Learned two things

I am glad to see the piece on Stanley Shenk ("Twists and Turns," January). We overlapped one year at Eastern Mennonite College. From him I learned two things that have served me well: inductive Bible study and how to write a research paper.
—*Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

Appreciation for Shenk

It was a joy to read about Stanley Shenk in the January issue ("Twists and Turns"). He was one of several excellent professors who taught through the Eastern Mennonite University (then College) Extension courses in New York City nearly 50 years ago. He made biblical studies exciting, alive and a joy. Stanley, along with Harold Bauman, G. Irvin Lehman, Clayton Beyeler and others indoctrinated this young, struggling, former farmer and now city pastor with the inductive method of Bible study.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the Lord, Eastern Mennonite Missions, the church and our colleges that sent and/or released them while they pursued further studies in New York City. Thanks to Stanley and all who made it possible.—*Paul G. Burkholder, Lititz, Pa.*

Peace through tourism?

The "Peace Through Tourism" editorial (Dec. 1, 2009) sparked my interest. I'm looking for ways to promote peace, and I like to see new places and meet new people. But then a few questions started burning in my mind.

Are there other ways to encounter and connect with different people and lifestyles without the consequences of travel? What about the connection between travel and the petrol wars of the past 20 years?

Am I confused about the connection seen by Middle Easterners (freedom fighters/terrorists) between the way Westerners have divided up their territory and people to gain and control access to oil?

Is it possible that the environmental impact of oil use in travel is acceler-

(continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

Penelope Adams Moon told her story in a seminar at the 2009 Mennonite Church USA Convention in Columbus, Ohio. We heard it and found it so compelling we decided to make it our cover story (page 12).

Tobin Miller Shearer, longtime leader in the efforts to dismantle racism in the church, got a much-needed confrontation from his friend Keith Wilson (page 20).

Dwight D. Roth and Donald Clymer offer an alternate view for older adults who despair of the younger generation (page 23).

Several articles are intended to strengthen our readers' devotional lives. Freelancer Jan Johnson suggests how to "meditate on the run" (page 30). Tammy Darling is transparent in describing some foolishness in her prayers (page 32).

The news section includes several articles published here for the first time. Anna Groff reports on a U.S. Army major who has been identified as a nonpacifist Mennonite pastor (page 45). Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership describes efforts it is making to be more responsive to the needs of congregations and conferences (page 38).

Because February is Black History Month in the United States, we publish Glen Guyton's News Analysis piece entitled, "What's Next for African-American Mennonites?" (page 46).—*Editor*

Hearts broken and exalted

Sara Dick is associate pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

This time of year, when I look out my kitchen window on a quiet evening, I do not feel happy.

Outside I see leafless trees in profile against a frigid sunset. I see last summer's flowers covered in snow and lit by a gray, midday sky. These scenes are empty of conventional beauty, the plants and sky fasting from the summer sun's intense glow.

A month out from the gaiety of Christmas and New Year celebrations, I find this desolate landscape a welcome sight as I prepare for Lent. Fasting and repenting and remembering one's mortality fit well with the deathly beauty of winter. Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

We are dust-things—earthlings—created in God's own image and bound to die. As Christians, we die at least twice: once when we are baptized, again when our bodies give out, and maybe a million times in between, when we have to release our hold on this life to make room for the new life we receive through God's great mercy and power.

Some Christians fast during Lent, giving up certain foods or television or cars to make room for God. When we fast, we rid ourselves of the distracting foliage of our usual well-watered and sun-drenched lives. We resist the world's push to fill ourselves with something—anything—that will ease our emptiness. We repent, admitting to God and to others our pain and our regrets. We pray with the psalmist:

Lent is, by most North American standards, a disaster. Sign up to be sad? … No way!

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
—Psalm 51:10

Lent is, by most North American standards, a disaster. Sign up to be sad? Agree to abstain from the best life has to offer? Plead for forgiveness and purification? No way! We'd rather be happy, happy, happy. In fact, happiness is all the rage. Books, radio, television, magazines—they all tout happiness's merits and tell you how to achieve it.

So is something wrong with me for preferring, at times, the gloomy but real view out my kitchen window over my lush, tulip-filled computer screen? Should Christians ditch Lent and try to be happier instead? After all, the same psalmist goes on:

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
—Psalm 51:12

But the psalmist does not plead for joy untethered from pain and sorrow. Just ask someone with diabetes if feeling no pain is a good idea. "Nope," they'll tell you. "If I can't feel pain, I'll lose my feet." If they don't notice the blisters and bruises of everyday life, those pains go unattended and infection can result. So, too, with our world's blisters and bruises: If we ignore grief, heartache, injustice and hunger, those needs go unattended and evil runs amok.

In his book *Against Happiness*, Eric Wilson writes, "With no more melancholics, we would live in a world in which everyone simply accepted the status quo." Pain and sorrow are often how we learn from our errors or recognize our sins. These "unhappy" feelings can be the key to our world's and our personal healing, as so many have found through the 12-Step program.

We'll fare better to choose the fast for justice of Isaiah (58:6-9) and the weeping for repentance of Joel (2:16-17). We are all God's ministers, called to fast and weep for people who are hungry, lonely, homeless, grief-stricken—including for ourselves. And that's way down on the happiness scale.

Author C. S. Lewis describes one moment in his conversion to Christianity as his heart being "at once broken and exalted." Psalm 51 also reveals a heart "at once broken and exalted"—a heart that wishes to teach God's ways and declare God's praise.

Maybe to accept sorrow is to make room for joy. Like C. S. Lewis and the Psalmist, we may be surprised by joy when we immerse ourselves in the real world, a world that includes suffering, rather than attempting to force joy out of its hiding places.

A Christmas gift from a fourth-grader in my church helps me see it plainly: it's a handmade necklace with red ropey letters spelling "joy" affixed to a cross.

An Ethiopian Mennonite shares the pulpit

by Katerina Friesen

Hailu preaches and we tune
our vision toward him, turn
our palms to heaven.

We hear an echo of jail hymns,
"I want to know Christ
and the fellowship of sharing."
He recalls trial like a man
talks of his childhood: confident,
changed and strangely—wistful.

To the suburbs, the whites
of his eyes are like Ethiopian saints',
holy and large.
We have our martyrs, too, submerged
under stones and ropes and frozen baptisms.

I think of the Esaus, Penners,
the Reimers, homes an open cell,
men dragged off one by one,
where stifle was worse than scream.
"My testimony is no different,"
Hailu says. "No Christian pastor
escaped the communist hold."

I remember my ancestors in Russia,
who after barely escaping sainthood,
picked California grapes, fed
and raised their quiet children,
who somehow forgot
how to talk about crying.

Hailu leans into the pulpit,
clutches the unyielding
wood, he is a dark tree
and warns, "If you truly follow Jesus,
the land of democracy will persecute you."

Our limp hands lie,
some open, signs of grace,
others folded, already blessed.
Our overflowing carts await.
Hailu closes his eyes.
"Are you willing to suffer?"
We nod, we know and think we know,
but we do not applaud.

Katerina Friesen lives in Mariposa, Calif.

Ervin Stutzman installation plans made

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The installation service for Ervin R. Stutzman, the new executive director of Mennonite Church USA, is planned. It is scheduled for 4:30 p.m., March 7, at his home congregation, Park View Mennonite Church, in Harrisonburg. The public is invited.

Executive Board member Terry Shue of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church is chairing the program committee for the installation service. John 15:1-5 and its reference to the vine and the branches has been chosen to guide the planning. The metaphor of the vine will be woven through the service.

For the service, Mennonite Church USA congregations have been invited to write prayers for the church. These will be joined together in a worship visual at the front of the sanctuary.

"The installation of Ervin Stutzman as the new executive director will be an important milestone in the life of Mennonite Church USA," says moderator Ed Diller, Fort Thomas, Ky. "Ervin's great gifts and wonderful experience will help our church follow its vision to be a vehicle for God's healing and hope to the world. We ask that all members of the church be in prayer for Ervin and Mennonite Church USA at this important time."—*Mennonite Church USA*

Church rings bell 350 times to call for action

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Some members at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., gathered in the cold rain at 8:30 a.m. on Dec. 13, 2009, to ring the church bell 350 times as a call to world leaders at the U.N. climate summit in Copenhagen, Denmark. The bell ringing served as a reminder that many scientists say that atmospheric concentration of CO^2 needs to be scaled back to 350 parts per million. Nancy Heisey, a member at Community Mennonite who just completed serving as president of Mennonite World Conference, said, "I've heard friends from Bangladesh and Zimbabwe describing the harsh effects of climate change. Ringing the bell is a way of letting U.S. leaders know I'm one of millions around the world crying out for action to protect our planet."—*Jim Bishop*

Fund for Peoplehood Education awards grants

GOSHEN, Ind.—The Fund for Peoplehood Education Grant Committee has announced its most recent grant recipients. The Peace and Justice Academy of Pasadena, Calif., received a $1,000 grant for a new restorative justice course elective. Goshen (Ind.) College received a $1,000 grant for a book project on the history of Mennonite youth ministry. Mennonite Church USA received a $2,000 grant for an oral history project on interchurch relations. Mennonite Education Agency received a $4,000 grant for initial work on a new Shared Distance Learning System. The Fund for Peoplehood Education is a donor-restricted term endowment. Since 1995, the fund has supported initiatives that promote the distinctive features of church-sponsored education and encourage strong ties between Mennonite Church USA and its schools.
—*Mennonite Church USA*

Talking stick gift

Isadore Charters receives a "talking stick" as a gift of thanks from Chair Willard Metzger on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada Witness Council during meetings last October. In First Nations tradition, the talking stick is passed around in a circle discussion to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to speak.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

MMA fund meets needs

GOSHEN, Ind.—As the recession of 2009 deepened, Mennonite Mutual Aid realized its regularly budgeted Sharing Fund money wasn't going to meet the needs of financially struggling people this year. For the first time, the Sharing Fund ran out of money last June.

Knowing the intensity of the needs families would continue to face during the recession, MMA provided an additional $50,000 in June through a specially created, one-time Faith in the Future Grant.

This money was used only for people who had lost their jobs or who were underemployed because of the economy. Through this grant, until all its funds were disbursed in November 2009, more than 300 additional families received assistance.

The total grant amount was increased by an additional $10,000 made available when MMA decided to scale down the size of its booth at the Mennonite Church USA convention 2009 in Columbus, Ohio, last summer.
—*MMA*

Israeli soldiers injure shepherds and CPTers

AT-TUWANI, Hebron—On Jan. 7, Israeli soldiers attacked and injured Palestinian shepherds near the village of At-Tuwani in the South Hebron Hills. Christian Peacemaker Team members accompanying the shepherds tried to videotape the violent attack, but the soldiers pushed them.

One soldier grabbed and broke one of their video cameras. Before leaving the area, the soldiers arrested one of the shepherds, Musab Musa Raba'i. Israeli police told CPTers there would be a military investigation into the actions of the soldiers.—*CPT*

Church joins Advent Conspiracy

MILFORD, Neb.—Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb., joined the Advent Conspiracy—a movement started in 2006 by pastors hoping to convince Christians to live the true meaning of Christmas.

Advent Conspiracy promotes four main ideas: Worship fully, spend less, give more and love more. Bellwood members were encouraged to prioritize worship and spend less money on gift buying. Congregants wore blue silicone bracelets that said "Advent Conspiracy" as reminders.

The church contributed to Mennonite Central Committee's clean water projects in Mozambique. Throughout Advent, a well situated in the back of the worship center pumped water as a reminder. The church's drinking fountain was turned off on the last Sunday of Advent to create solidarity with others around the world. The congregation of 130 worshipers gave $22,036 to MCC. —*Bellwood Mennonite Church*

D.C. Wedel, Bethel's sixth president, dies at 101

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—David C. "D.C." Wedel, 101, Bethel College's sixth president, died Jan. 13 at Bethesda Home in Goessel, Kan. He once reminisced that he had "shaken the hand of every Bethel president but the first one" (Cornelius H. Wedel, no relation). D.C. Wedel served as Bethel president from 1952-59.

Wedel graduated from Bethel in 1933. He earned a B.D. degree from Colgate Rochester (N.Y.) Divinity School in 1936. From 1936-46, he served as pastor of First Mennonite Church in Halstead, Kan., with a brief hiatus to be director of the Civilian Public Service Camp in Marietta, Ohio, in 1941.

In 1946, Bethel president Edmund G. Kaufman invited Wedel to serve as acting dean while the current dean took a sabbatical. Later he got his doctorate in Christian education from Iliff School of Theology in Denver.

He was named Bethel Outstanding Alumnus for 1982.

Wedel was born March 16, 1908, in Goessel to Cornelius C. Wedel and Kathrina Unrau Wedel. In 1936, he married Martha Quiring, who died in 1998.—*Bethel College*

Photo provided

Chicago church receives grant from Join Hands

Lyle Troyer (second from right), secretary of Mennonite Men, presents a check for $40,000 from Mennonite Men's Join Hands church-building program to Living Water Community Church in Chicago on Dec. 20, 2009. From left are Rod and Sandy Nofziger of North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio, Ruth Goring and George Putman of Living Water, Lyle and Edna Troyer. Living Water is a multicultural church that began meeting in 1995 and purchased its first building in 2004, a single-story commercial property in a racially and ethnically diverse urban area. The grant helps make possible the purchase and renovation of the building. North Clinton contributed $12,000 of the grant from a tithe of its own building fund.—*Gordon Houser*

MCC responds to Haiti

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee is responding to the earthquake that struck Haiti Jan. 12 and killed thousands of people.

MCC has committed $100,000 U.S. for immediate needs. International Program Department director Ron Flaming anticipates a response of at least $1 million over multiple years.

MCC has been working in Haiti since 1958. MCC workers in Haiti include nine people from the United States, Colombia and the Netherlands, seven Haitian program staff members and additional support staff. MCC supports efforts in reforestation and environmental education, human rights and advocacy for food security.

Donations should be designated Haiti Earthquake and can be made online or by calling or sending a check to an MCC office.—*MCC*

Items of interest from the broader church and world

76.1

The percentage of Americans in 2007 who got to work by driving alone. Only 10.4 percent carpooled, while 4.9 percent used public transportation and 2.8 percent walked.—*Newsweek*

Food forecast not good without change

Global warming and resulting erratic weather could cut crop yields in half in some developing countries by 2050, says the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington. Irrigated wheat, for example, may yield 34 percent less than in 2000, and irrigated rice 19 percent less, it predicts. South Asia can look forward to a 50 percent drop in wheat yield, and in the Middle East, maize could drop by 47 percent. The institute says the dramatic changes can be offset only by another Green Revolution.—*The Economist*

A death knell for the death penalty

Last fall, the American Law Institute (ALI), which created the intellectual framework for the modern capital justice system almost 50 years ago, pronounced its project a failure and walked away from it.

There were other important death penalty developments last year: the number of death sentences continued to fall, Ohio switched to a single chemical for lethal injections and New Mexico repealed its death penalty entirely. But not one of them was as significant as the institute's move, which represents a tectonic shift in legal theory.

"The ALI is important on a lot of topics," says Franklin E. Zimring, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley. "They were absolutely singular on this topic"—capital punishment—"because they were the only intellectually respectable support for the death penalty system in the United States."

The institute is made up of about 4,000 judges, lawyers and law professors. It synthesizes and shapes the law in restatements and model codes that provide structure and coherence in a federal legal system that might otherwise consist of 50 different approaches to everything.

The institute's recent decision to abandon the field was a compromise. Some members had asked the institute to take a stand against the death penalty as such. That effort failed.

Instead, the institute voted in October 2009 to disavow the structure it had created "in light of the current intractable institutional and structural obstacles to ensuring a minimally adequate system for administering capital punishment."

That last sentence contains some pretty dense lawyer talk, but it can be untangled. What the institute was saying is that the capital justice system in the United States is irretrievably broken.

A study commissioned by the institute said that decades of experience had proved that the system could not reconcile the twin goals of individualized decisions about who should be executed and systemic fairness. It added that capital punishment was plagued by racial disparities; was enormously expensive even as many defense lawyers were underpaid and some were incompetent; risked executing innocent people; and was undermined by the politics that come with judicial elections.

Roger S. Clark, who teaches at the Rutgers School of Law in Camden, N.J., and was one of the leaders of the movement to have the institute condemn the death penalty outright, says he is satisfied with the compromise. "Capital punishment is going to be around for a while," he says. "What this does is pull the plug on the whole intellectual underpinnings for it."

The framework the institute developed in 1962 was an effort to make the death penalty less arbitrary. It proposed limiting capital crimes to murder and narrowing the categories of people eligible for the punishment. Most important, it gave juries a framework to decide whom to put to death, asking them to balance aggravating factors against mitigating ones.

Some supporters of the death penalty say they welcome the institute's move. Capital sentencing "is so micromanaged by Supreme Court precedents that a model statute really serves little function," says Kent Scheidegger of the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation.

But opponents of the death penalty said the institute's move represented a turning point. "It's bad news for the continued legitimacy of the death penalty," Zimring says. "But it's the kind of bad news that has many more implications for the long term than for next week or the next term of the Supreme Court."—*Adam Liptak in* The New York Times

NYS Dept. of Correctional Services

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “The gospel is never an individual enterprise. In the same way we are called to preach the gospel and serve the poor, we are called to build community.” —*Valdir Steuernagel, Brazilian pastor and theologian, in* Christianity Today

Allied Forces Pocket Bible printed

Soldiers Bible Ministry (SBM), a division of 501c3 Heart of God International Ministries, Inc. announced Nov. 3, 2009, its plans for a special Heritage Edition Soldiers Pocket Bible.

“Our goal is to provide complete pocket Bibles for any allied Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and/or Air Force personnel around the world, especially those in harm's way,” said John Hoben, volunteer executive director of SBM. “We provide Bibles to those who request them in their native language, along with Bible study materials from solid sources that resonate well with military personnel,” Hoben added.

Plans include a camouflage cover titled *The Word*. Also included are the official preambles for all 50 states, highlighting the use of Almighty God or similar titles in each preamble. This new publication will also include the facsimile reprints of the original Soldiers Pocket Bible, which will be presented either in the front material or in pamphlet form to be inserted into each copy, reminding the reader of the precious heritage of the Word of God in the military throughout U.S. history.—*MMD Newswire*

Airline waste

- Number of Boeing 747 jets that could be built with the aluminum cans thrown away by airlines in 2004: **58**
- Height in feet newspapers and magazines thrown away by airlines in 2004 would reach if stacked on a football field: **230**
- Percentage of the 425,000 tons of passenger-related waste airports and airlines recycle annually: less than **20**

—*Yes! Magazine*

Lessons of war

Two methods have been used to squash insurrectionist movements in non-Western countries, says political commentator William Pfaff—and both have failed. One method, used in the early years of the Vietnam War, treats an insurrection as a conventional military operation and attempts to overwhelm it with superior military force. The other approach is the “clear and hold” method popularized by General David Petraeus in Iraq and being considered for use in Afghanistan. Pfaff suggests the best option is not to get into the situation in the first place; second best is to get out as quickly and gracefully as possible, which is what Pfaff recommends for the United States in Afghanistan.—*The Christian Century*

Money a taboo topic

A new Canadian survey shows that teaching kids about finances ranks high on parents' squirm list. The study shows that Mom and Pop feel better equipped to talk about sex, drugs and alcohol than about finances. One reason is that parents think they don't know much about the topic, or maybe feel sheepish about their own financial behavior.—*The Marketplace*

Hunger charity may owe taxes

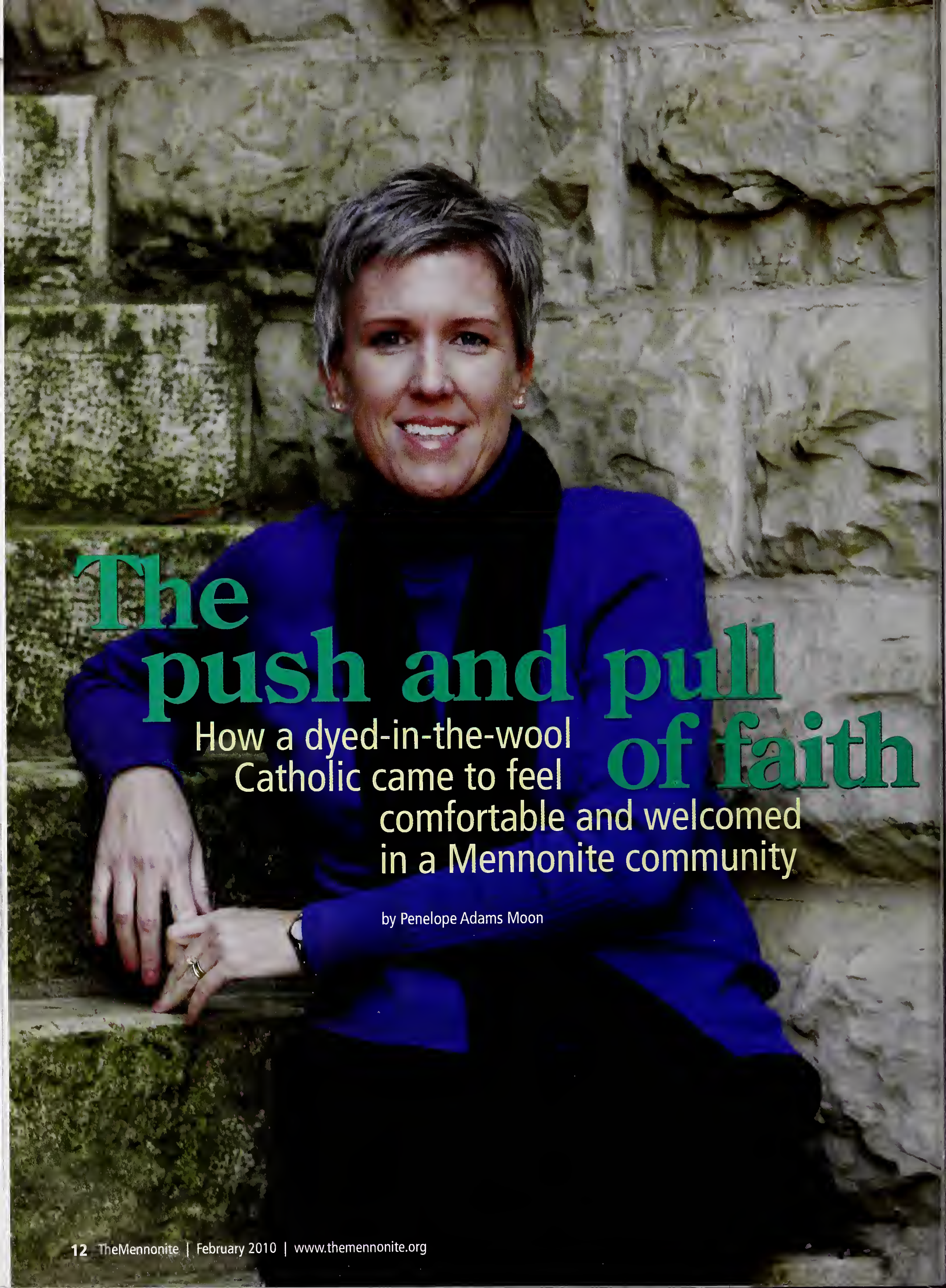
Feed the Children may owe more than $1 million to Oklahoma in back taxes, two fired accountants alleged in an October 2009 lawsuit. The accountants were fired in September after reporting the possible tax delinquency to state authorities in hopes of getting the liability reduced. The Oklahoma City-based Christian relief organization, which raises more than $1 billion annually for global hunger, declined comment on its sixth lawsuit of 2009.—*Christianity Today*

Happiest countries on Earth

Based on the New Economics Foundation's Happy Planet Index (happyplanetindex.org), which ranks countries according to three things: how happy its citizens are, how long they live and how much of the planet's resources they each consume.

1. Costa Rica, 76.1
2. Dominican Republic, 71.8
3. Jamaica, 70.1
4. Guatemala, 68.4
5. Vietnam, 66.5
6. Colombia, 66.1
7. Cuba, 65.7
8. El Salvador, 61.5
9. Brazil, 61.0
10. Honduras, 61.0
111. Macedonia, 32.7
112. Congo, 32.4
113. Madagascar, 31.5
114. United States, 30.7

—*Yes! Magazine*



The push and pull of faith

How a dyed-in-the-wool Catholic came to feel comfortable and welcomed in a Mennonite community

by Penelope Adams Moon

Historians of immigration often identify "push" and "pull" factors when trying to explain an individual or group's decision to pick up and go as well as their choice of destination. This helps explain what led me to knock on Mennonite doors. While my experience has been unique in many ways, I would be surprised if it didn't share at least some similarities with others' experiences—I'm not that weird. Perhaps our community might find ways to engage others in similar circumstances.

While we may not have control over what pushes people out of other faith traditions, we can better understand and walk with people facing these circumstances if we listen to each other's stories. The goal is to find a way to be authentic without being insular and inviting without selling out.

Before I go on, understand that I am not an expert on anything religious. I know only the basics about Mennonite faith and history. Also, my faith is in serious crisis. In 2008, my mother lost a brief, intense battle with colon cancer. The diagnosis was unexpected, and the illness ravaged her body and her mind in a matter of months. As I helped my mother during her last weeks, I saw things I wish I hadn't seen, things that brought my faith tumbling down. I know most children will experience the death of their parents and that it's hard, but I was not prepared for this. And I sense that many people around me wish I would just get over it already and move on. But watching my mother die in such a horrific manner exploded my worldview. I am not the same person, and I may never be. I am painfully in limbo.

I say this not to garner your sympathy but to make clear that anything I say when it comes to faith should be taken with a whole shaker full of salt. I'm no longer a Roman Catholic but can't help but think of myself as Catholic in many ways. I worship with a Mennonite congregation but don't consider myself Mennonite in the ways outlined by *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. The bitterness brought on by my mother's death prevents me from identifying myself as a seeker, but I did change religious communities. So I am in a weird place—stuck between past and present, between frustration and longing.

Nevertheless, in the last eight years I have found a wonderful sense of place and belonging among Mennonites. As I began to walk with Mennonites, I found I could explore new issues and test old assumptions—the key to a good religious life. I found also that I could keep some of my Catholic heritage I still held dear.

My gravitation toward community with Mennonites was in large part due to being pushed out of the Catholic Church. My reservations about some of its practices and behavior eventually forced me to make a decision. I still believe the Catholic Church to be a wonderful institution and faith practice. It does infinitely more good than harm, and I will never regret having grown up in that church. For better or worse, I am who I am in large part because of the Catholic Church. Leaving it is the hardest decision I've ever made—I can't overstate how hard it was.

One reason it was hard is that I felt like a wimp for leaving. Faith is supposed to be a struggle, and religious observance is supposed to be challenging, so giving up on the Catholic Church felt like a copout. I could do Lenten fasting. I could do dozens of rosaries. I could kneel at length on hard floors. But I couldn't hack remaining in the church. To what extent should people suppress feelings fundamental to their being for the sake of maintaining a religious identity? How do we live our faith with integrity? Are we obligated to work within our faith for change no matter what? Is giving up ever justified? For years I had grown increasingly frustrated with the Catholic Church's refusal to recognize women as equal to men. I had also become frustrated with its seeming to put its temporal identity over its spiritual tenets, as I felt was the case with the pedophilia scandal. And having researched an aspect of the Catholic peace movement for my dissertation, I was frustrated by how radical Catholic peacemaking was—that is, how out of the ordinary it was. I wanted my church to—as an institution—be bolder about peacemaking. I was fed up with how the Catholic Church could be so unequivocal when it came to the issue of abortion but endlessly split hairs when it came to war.

> I am in a weird place—stuck between past and present, between frustration and longing.

▶

Vada Snider

Penny Moon in the classroom at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., where she teaches history.

So I'd go to Mass and stew. As I watched the all-male clergy lead Mass, I had this vigorous internal dialogue: Was I to give up feminism as a life philosophy—one that for me at least is rooted in Christ's teaching—to remain in concert with the Catholic Church's position on women? How was I going to explain to my daughter that women could never be priests? Was I supposed to root for "my team" when the Catholic Church chose litigation over radical reconciliation in the priest sex scandal? Was I to continue publicly praying for our troops upon request—a request that happened almost every time I went to Mass—and simply pray silently for the victims of war? Was worship even worship if you ended up angry when you left Mass?

Two other reasons leaving the Catholic Church was so hard were that I believed in hell and my mother was a super-Catholic. If one believes in hell and is a member of a church that proclaims itself the "one true Church," then leaving has to earn you an instant invite to the fiery party down below. Growing up Catholic, about the only thing I believed with confidence was that hell existed.

But even more prohibitive than the prospect of eternal damnation in the molten pits of hell was the hurt I knew I would cause my mother if I left. Before she married my father, she was a Sister of Mercy. She left the convent on good terms to marry my father and raised four daughters in the Catholic Church. We attended church like clockwork; I never remember missing Mass, not even for illness, and it wasn't for lack of trying. My mother gave to the church, taught at Catholic schools and eagerly saw to the religious education of her daughters. She was hardcore. Leaving the church would crush her. How could I do that to her?

And I didn't want to leave. I loved the church and felt at home in Catholic churches. Anywhere I went—Europe, South Africa, Tennessee—I could walk into a Catholic Church and understand what was going on. I cherished the visual feast that is most Catholic churches. Their statues and stained glass, their mosaics and textiles, their chalices and vestments taught me about the Bible, imbued in me a reverence for tradition and served as clear evidence of the transcendent in this temporal world. Perhaps above all, I loved the ritual that is Catholic practice. I loved how the Catholic faith walked me slowly through the year, encouraged me to anticipate, how it celebrated the drama of Christmas and Easter with a quiet, humble, purgative buildup. I loved the ritual so much that I used to go to Mass daily—eagerly awaiting my lunch hour when I worked at the University of Notre Dame so that I could bike over to Sacred Heart Basilica and share the quickest of masses with 10 strangers. Daily Mass reminded me that my life was paltry compared with the life of the Mass. In that big, almost empty basilica, I was drenched in otherworldly beauty and inevitably thought about the wonder of creation.

So I found myself seriously conflicted about what to do. Had it not been for the beauty of the Mennonite community around me, I would have simply slipped into that nebulous state known as lapsed Catholicism. I had been around other religious communities—I taught at a Southern Baptist college in Arizona and hadn't been tempted away from my Catholicism. I never felt as if I wanted to "shop around" to find another faith, even as I was growing frustrated with my own church. I figured I'd just practice my faith on my own. But encountering Mennonite faith and practice offered me a beautiful alternative—one that seemed to incorporate some of the beauty of my own tradition but also stressed things I felt were lacking in my own church life. The Mennonites I encountered—I'll call them "my Mennos"—welcomed me as I was, offering me an opportunity to find ways to follow Christ that felt genuine and meaningful.

One of the strongest pull factors into Mennonite community for me—and this may seem shallow, but oh well—was the singing. When I came to Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.), I remember hearing four-part singing for the first time. I'll never forget that moment—standing on the steps of the administration building at Bethel at the end of a day of faculty retreat and hearing my colleagues break into song before a meal. I was stunned. The singing was breathtaking to me. It took a good deal of willpower not to let the tears that had welled up in my eyes roll down my cheeks. I remember thinking, Good God, what is this place? I had never heard people spontaneously engage in four-part singing before, particularly not in church. Catholics aren't really known for their singing—although there's a truckload of great, transcendent music we owe to Catholics. While my Mennos are sadly lacking in transcendent visual aids—my church is taupe. I love taupe, but come on!—Mennonite singing is wonderfully transcendent. If I was going to make the leap from Catholic to something else, that something else would have to meet my needs for transcendence in the absence of the Catholic visual tradition. Mennonite singing filled that void almost completely.

There was—there is—lots of singing at Bethel College. As I navigated through my first few years at Bethel, I began to understand that the singing I heard was simply a reflection of the community's values, and those values were rooted in Mennonite faith and practice.

I know this is not a new observation, but four-part singing beautifully models Christian community. It requires cooperation, love, acceptance of difference and humility. It requires us to admit we need each other, are better in community and that difference doesn't need to mean discord but can actually produce harmony. My encounter with Mennonite singing seemed to me like a glimpse of what Christians might expect in heaven—lots of different people and cultures getting along and singing well together.

The singing at Bethel was just one aspect of a larger practice of Mennonite hospitality I encountered. Just as four-part singing requires a group and individuals to welcome others who sing different parts, my Mennos at Bethel practiced these values in nonsinging contexts. If you've ever been to Bethel, you know it is an amazingly hospitable place. I felt immediately at home there—even as a non-Mennonite feminist Catholic military brat from Arizona. I felt as if I'd known the people I met during my interview for years. My Mennos welcomed me with food—always the food—and conversation. But more than that, they seemed genuinely interested in my perspective as a Catholic and welcomed religious dialogue. From the get go I was invited to speak—often from a Catholic perspective—in chapel and at convocation. I was invited to teach the senior-level religion course at Bethel—Basic Issues of Faith and Life. Me.

My Mennos worked hard to make those who were different feel comfortable. Bethel's chapel services embody this ethic of hospitality. Chapel routinely incorporated meaningful rites from Judaism, Islam and Catholicism, encouraging the community to explore faith from a host of directions. Even as I felt increasingly uncomfortable with my own faith, I never felt that my Catholic identity was something I had to hide in chapel. What this type of hospitality told me is that my Mennos practiced what Jesus preached. They were open to the possibility that truth might not necessarily come only in the form of zwiebach and verenike, but taste more like chana Punjabi or even a grilled cheese sandwich. My Mennos embraced the grilled cheese sandwich because they knew it was part of creation and might open up new channels of observation and understanding. This form of hospitality benefited everyone involved—it welcomed outsiders as Christ—though I think Christ would have been fat as a house had he been welcomed by my Mennos—and it provided the community another lens through which to search for truth.

If you've ever been to Bethel, you know it is an amazingly hospitable place.

This welcoming of difference—welcoming in general—is tied to what my Mennos routinely refer to as "discernment." When I first heard this term, I didn't know what to think. I'd been raised in educational environments that valued critical thinking, but you might say that my religious practice was less about discernment and more about discipline. For example, I once attended the investment of a new pastor at my Catholic Church in Newton. The ritual called for the new pastor to answer questions asked by the bishop in the affirmative. One question in particular shocked me. The bishop said, as I recall, "Do you promise to uphold and fulfill the teachings of the Church without question?" Without question? Everything I had been taught in school and everything I preached in my professional life placed high value on thinking critically, carefully and methodically analyzing the truthfulness of statements and not taking things at face value. Yet here was the bishop expecting the pastor to not question the Church's teaching. Increasingly I felt that if those teachings and traditions were so right on, what was the harm in subjecting them to a little scrutiny?

But my Mennos had no trouble scrutinizing things—just go to a faculty meeting at Bethel and you'll see what I mean. This practice of discernment seemed to solve one of the major issues I had with the Catholic Church.

I loved that these Mennonites were Christians who seemed to openly admit that they didn't necessarily have the final say on anything.

Discernment has to do with judging the veracity of something, working toward insight, determining the truthfulness of any given statement. I loved that these Mennonites were Christians who seemed to openly admit that they didn't necessarily have the final say on anything—be it the Bible, the position of women in the church, the morality of homosexuality, anything. The humility involved in that was like a breath of fresh air. It also felt so entirely genuine to me because even as a Catholic, I never felt comfortable making truly definitive statements about matters of faith. After all, it's faith. We can't know for sure. For me, who at the time felt rudderless when it came to faith, the practice of discernment was not simply an admission that no one has all the answers; it was an invitation to join others in seeking answers anyway.

My Mennos' process of discernment, I learned, was intimately tied to the congregational, free-church nature of Mennonite communities. Unlike the clear chain of command in the Catholic Church, Mennonites had to figure things out for themselves. This was a discipline just as rigorous as the various forms of discipline I loved in the Catholic Church.

I would be eating lunch with my mostly-Menno colleagues at Bethel and listen to how their congregations were struggling with difficult issues and that the process was sticky and messy and heartbreaking, but it was a process. There was no foregone conclusion. I found this beautiful.

My colleagues at Bethel were among the primary reasons I gravitated toward Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton. Early in my career I became aware that Bethel had a reputation as the "liberal" Mennonite college, which I think is code for secular humanist. But this reputation is unwarranted. My colleagues at Bethel were inspiring models of Christian love and service. I learned that many of my favorite colleagues, such as John McCabe-Juhnke, attended this church called Shalom. Right off the bat, I liked the name. It was an ambiguous term that suggested love, peace, welcoming and an interest in things international. I knew John volunteered and experimented with prison theater. I knew that another colleague, Merle Schlabaugh, attended Shalom and headed up Amnesty International at Bethel. I thought, If these giving people all go to Shalom, it must be a special place. So one of the draws into a Mennonite congregation for me was not blatant evangelizing or even an ice cream social (although that's a start) but the unconscious modeling of love I witnessed in my colleagues at Bethel.

I decided that it was time to check Shalom out. I attended my first worship there more than four years ago. I don't remember too many specifics about it, but I was entranced by pastor Eric Massanari's sermon. I felt energized and challenged when I left worship—a big change from what my post-Mass state of mind had been for the previous few years. It was a wonderful combination of intellectual inquiry and heartfelt searching. His sermons were often timely—incorporating current events and contemporary cultural references—and suggested that faith was practiced among the living and in the moment. They also incorporated exegesis and historical analysis to reveal the reading as part of a tradition. Over the next few years, Eric delivered sermon after sermon that challenged me and my husband to

Penny Moon in front of the administration building at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., where she teaches history.

Vada Snider

think about difficult issues—the meaning of Sabbath, the lure and the lie of materialism, the cause of peacemaking, the challenge of living amid difference. His measured, soft-spoken style could be calming and reassuring but also contain admonishments to more fully practice the more difficult aspects of hospitality. Like the rest of worship, Eric's sermons, along with the sermons of associate pastor Sara Dick, were often inventive, again embracing different traditions and genres to move the message from pulpit to pew. I appreciated their energy and how much effort they put in crafting good, meaningful sermons. But I most appreciated that these weren't pastors who simply toted the party line—their sermons were full of searching and questions and were beautiful.

One of the weirdest parts of that first worship meeting was "sharing time." This was something new for me—the congregants were actually invited to stand up and share their joys and concerns and their thoughts on the day's sermon. This was, to use a current figure of speech, whack! As the famed Catholic journalist John Cogley once noted, Catholic worship is a pulpit tradition, a one-way conversation. Catholics don't "dialogue" during Mass. But my Mennos were discerning right there in public in front of everyone; they had their discernment hanging out all over the place. More than that, they were practicing hospitality without food. They were inviting others to share their perspectives. It was remarkable, even if it was a bit frightening. I was used to being anonymous at Mass—and that's not always a bad thing. But now I was in a church where people knew my name and hoped I would be comfortable sharing about my life. This was crazy new to me.

But with all the newness I experienced during those first few worship meetings, I also found many familiar and therefore comforting elements in Shalom's worship. The singing, while ▶

not like Catholic singing, was rooted in a long tradition, and Catholics are big on tradition. There was an organ; that was good. There were candles—excellent. There was a recognizable and fairly consistent flow to worship. While there wasn't the march of sit, kneel, stand, that I had known from the Catholic Church, there was some consistency in worship from Sunday to Sunday. Over time, Shalom even instituted a processional that helped center people at the beginning of worship and that looked and felt much like the beginning of a Catholic Mass. These familiar elements helped me make the transition without too much homesickness. I'm wondering if we might be well advised to ask people in transition who are exploring our congregations what elements they find similar or new from their previous practice. For me, the familiar elements suggested I was continuing on a journey instead of abruptly ending one trip and taking a drastic, jarring turn on to something else.

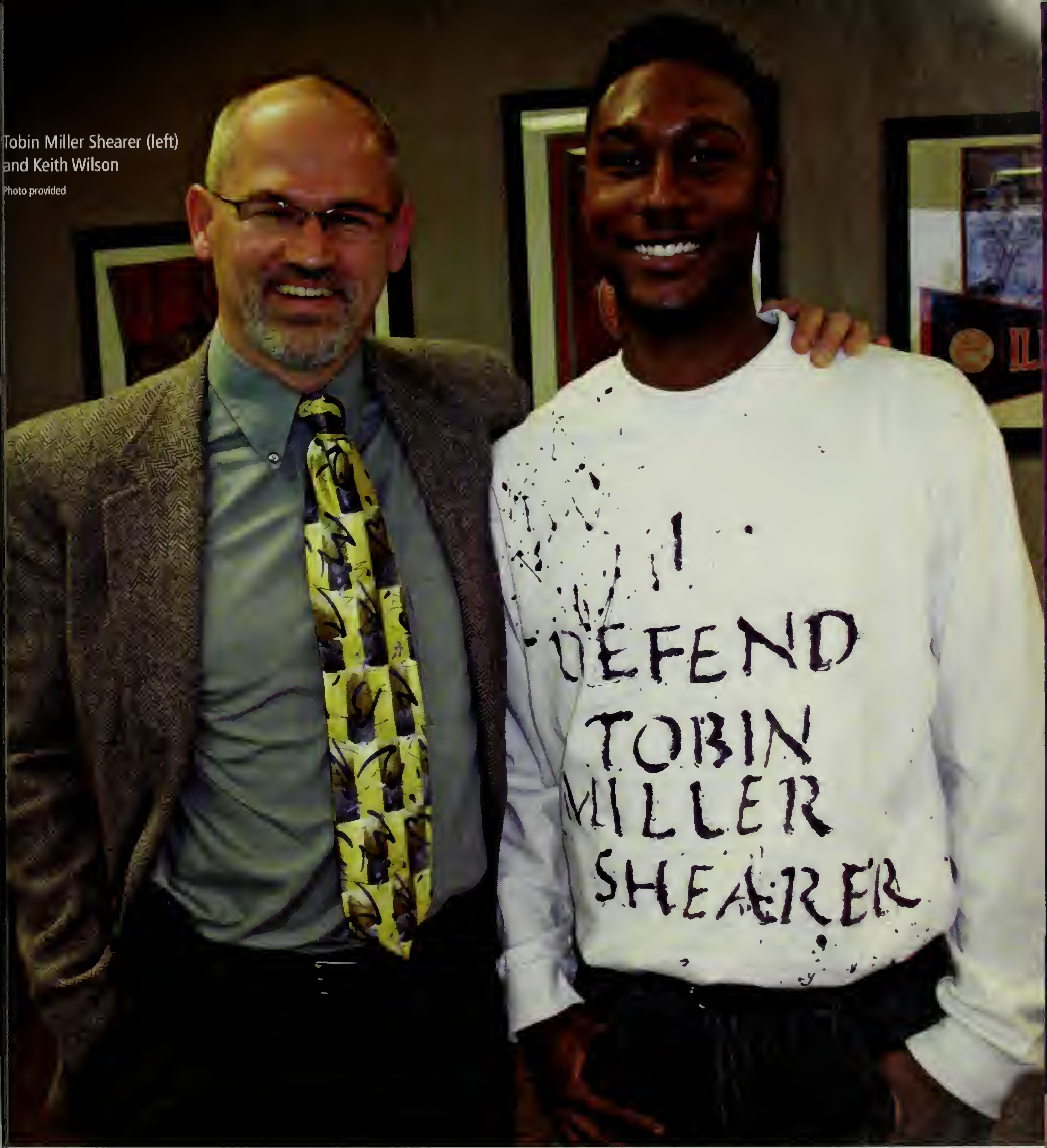
Before choosing to attend regularly, I met with Eric and shared how I was feeling. I told him I didn't share all of the beliefs outlined in the confession of faith and that I still held dearly to many tenets of Catholic belief and practice. I also inquired if my husband, a nonbeliever, would be welcome at Shalom. Eric assured me that we were both welcome. He noted that Shalom was a church full of people, many of whom had shifted in their faith, many had been wounded by their religious upbringings, and the congregation as a whole was all over the map in terms of where people were on their Christian journey. I would not be required to mark off all the boxes on the Mennonite checklist; I need not learn the secret Mennonite handshake or get the Mennonite tattoo in order to attend. In short, I was welcome as I was.

Eric allowed me to find ways to draw upon the best of my tradition, but in a context that now felt more genuine.

Before I close, here is one of the most moving examples of how I was welcomed as I was into my Mennonite community. It occurred when I was scheduled to a have a disk replaced in my neck a few years ago. The surgery is pretty gruesome and carries some risk that your carotid artery might get nicked. I'm not a doctor, but my sense is that the carotid artery is a pretty important one and that nicking it is not advisable. I was scared. I felt I had to prepare for the worst, and my upbringing taught me that that preparation needed to include confession. So I approached Eric and asked if he would hear my confession as a priest would have done in a Catholic setting. If Eric was uncomfortable with this request, he never let on but immediately agreed to participate. To this day I tear up when I think of how difficult and moving that confession was and how Eric prayed with and over me. I went into surgery with wracked nerves but a calm soul. Eric had allowed me to find ways to draw upon the best of my tradition, but in a context that now felt more genuine. I found myself confessing things to Eric that I would have not been able to confess to a priest. I confessed things I had walked around with for decades and felt a sense of relief after. Eric was more approachable than any priest I had ever met. He was like the rest of his congregants—walking and searching. That was a beautiful experience for me, and I remember thinking, I've found a good place.

Dale Schrag, director of church relations at Bethel, likes to tell anyone who will listen that Mennonites believe that when Christ spoke, he was talking to us—to you, me, that smelly guy sitting next to you. My Mennos seem to take Christ seriously. They don't always succeed, but they seem conscious of the task in front of them. They read about Christ's radical hospitality and seek to put that into practice. They hear Christ boldly telling it like it is but also gently teaching those around him, and they seem prepared to do the same when it comes to a host of issues, not the least of which are war and injustice. They see Christ simultaneously embrace tradition and venture into new territory, and as a result they cultivate a worship meeting that reaches out, in, back and forward, even as it is rooted in the moment. But most importantly, just as Christ walked everywhere—back and forth across the Holy Land—my Mennos are a people on a journey, and they have been nice enough to invite me along.

Penelope Adams Moon is associate professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. This article is adapted from a seminar she gave at Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009 in Columbus, Ohio, last summer.

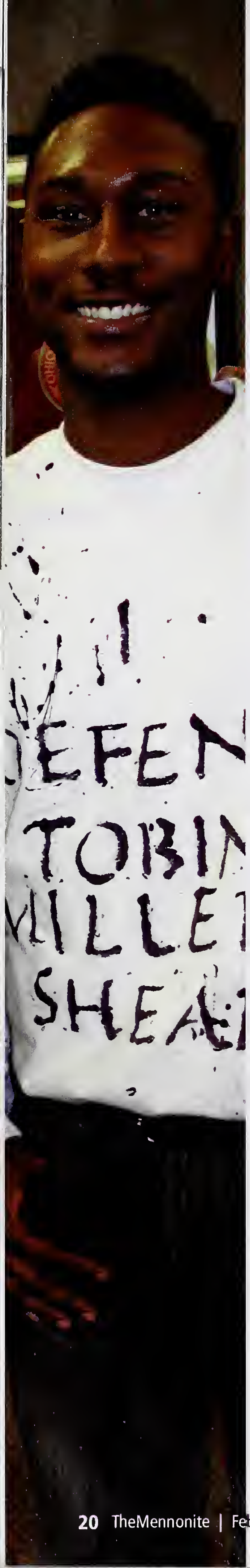


Tobin Miller Shearer (left) and Keith Wilson

Photo provided

Supper club, Keith Wilson and the twigs of grace

by Tobin Miller Shearer



Words from a trusted friend, a supper club and a river float challenge the author and the Mennonite Church to notice unexpected, unassuming and uncommon grace.

In a church pummeled by recession, unsettled by transition and immersed in controversy, grace can get lost. During my year's separation from family, friends and congregation, the Spirit strove to remind me that grace, like a twig floating on a river, will pass by unnoticed if I do not pay attention. If not for the bracing challenge of a talented hairdresser, I would have missed an opportunity to let grace unfurl around me. Unexpected, unassuming and uncommon, the grace given me in the past year may speak to a church so determined to be missional that we often fail to notice the unexpected inbreaking of the Spirit.

> If not for the bracing challenge of a talented hairdresser, I would have missed an opportunity to let grace unfurl around me.

In the summer of 2008, my wife of nearly 22 years left me in Missoula, Mont., the town where I would be living for the next 10 months. While I started a new job at the University of Montana, Cheryl returned to Evanston, Ill., so that our sons could finish their high school senior year. Uncharacteristically I did not weep as she and the boys puttered off in our Volkswagen diesel. The distance seemed too long, the yawning wait too wide for emotion to break through. I hopped on my bike—dubbed a nerdcycle by my ever affectionate offspring—and went to the office to read.

A few weeks before, our congregation, the ever bold and beautiful Community Mennonite of Markham, Ill., had bidden me goodbye. For seven years the spirit of those who worship across lines of race and class in a struggling suburb of Chicago had buoyed, bathed and breathed upon us. At Community, we knew we were always loved. Without question. With abundance. Despite a 45-minute Sunday morning drive and increasingly late Saturday night curfews, our sons never complained about the commute. They, too, knew they were loved at Community. Where I did not weep in Missoula when my family drove away, I did cry in church as the wise women of our congregation reminded me that they had prayed me into my new job and God would be with me in Montana, even as he had been in Markham. I left church grieving, feeling empty and worrying about transition. I had no hope that grace would intervene.

The year moved slowly. I learned to cook for one, busy myself with research and breath the crisp air of fall in the Rockies. Living in a basement apartment decorated in early 1970s chic—dark wood paneling, red shag carpet, parquet flooring—didn't help. I rode the nerdcycle to and from campus, counting days until I could fly home for Christmas break. Despite working with students I loved and being welcomed by colleagues who made sure I didn't always eat alone, I grew ever more lonely as the year progressed. I saw no grace around me.

Keith Wilson, however, soon shook me awake. To understand how Keith came to jostle me from quiescence, I need first introduce him. Keith is a member of Community Mennonite, a businessman, a fashion designer, a hair dresser and one of the most faithful people I know. For the last four years at Community, Keith and I had led a young adult Sunday school class. Somewhere in the midst of our Sunday morning conversations, we decided it would be fun to prepare Scripture skits in the freshly irreverent style of dramatists Lee Eshelman and Ted Swartz before Lee's untimely death. As we used goofy voices, crazy characters and unexpected circumstances to enliven Scripture, we grew to trust each other.

Before I left for Montana, Keith and a half dozen other members of our congregation traveled to Evanston in the middle of the week to attend my dissertation defense. Keith was not the only one who dressed up for the event, but he was the only one who designed his own T-shirt. It read, "I defend Tobin Miller Shearer" (see page 19). I was again moved.

On one of the Sundays during Christmas break, I mentioned to Keith how lonely I felt in Missoula. Ever attuned to the Spirit, Keith spoke to my true need. In response to my whiny lament, he said, "Well do something about it. God can't act if you don't." He stared at me for a minute or two, a look of concern furrowing his brow, then smiled and embraced me. His bracing counsel got my attention.

After pondering Keith's admonishment as I flew back to Missoula, I decided to start a supper club. I asked a group of six people if they would be interested in getting together once a week to share a meal. I explained that I was tired of eating supper by myself and just wanted a group to eat with on a regular basis. I was amazed to discover that others were interested in just such a thing. Two sisters in their 20s from Minnesota who attended the local Friends meeting, a red-headed professor from the university's religion department, a librarian and her graduate student husband, a visiting professor most recently from Louisiana, a hospice nurse with Mennonite connections and I began eating together in each other's homes.

We kept it simple. No agenda, no rules, no expectations. You could come for as long or as little as you wanted. Friends were always welcome. You could prepare any kind of meal as long as there was an option for the resident vegetarian. At first we met for an hour or so and then departed. Within a month, we were lingering over dessert and coffee for long hours into the evening. Our conversation ranged from postmodernism to alpaca farms, from our views of religion to our hopes for the future. On more than one occasion Zac regaled us with tales of his romantic misadventures. A visit from a friend of Beth's and Britta's prompted us to reflect on the most influential book we had ever read. Once we took a supper club field trip to natural hot springs just across the border in Idaho and spent the afternoon ruminating about faith and love and justice as we gazed at snowfields all around.

I soon looked forward to Tuesday nights at supper club. It became the highlight of my week. I knew I could count on friendly faces, a delicious meal and good conversation. As we spent more time eating together, we became more comfortable. We laughed easier, shared deeper, lingered later—sometimes until even the long Montana evenings turned dark. Although I still missed Cheryl and the boys, my loneliness was less acute, the ache less constant. The grace born of Keith's admonishment continued to unfold.

And so I wonder about the way God works in my life and in the life of the church. This supper club grace was first of all unexpected. Having left an intentional community in my mid-20s amid painful controversy, I was amazed to discover joy amid a similar community in my mid-40s. The grace made plain in a supper club was also unassuming. We do not feed the poor, represent God's racial diversity, share a common faith or claim a missional agenda. We just share a meal in each other's homes once a week. Nothing more. Nothing less. Finally, this grace is uncommon. I could not have anticipated that the prayerful assurances of African-American women in Chicago would be born out by white westerners in Montana. Yet what an uncommon gift to find full welcome, unconditional embrace and nonjudgmental acceptance! Too often the church fails to embody such authentic hospitality.

Cheryl and the boys are now with me in Montana. When we arrived, members of our supper club first welcomed us here. As we look for a church community, foster friendships and seek employment for Cheryl and Zachary, we turn first to our supper club with joys and disappointments. Just last Sunday our group floated down the Bitter Root River. As we rested on rented inner tubes, we passed a community of believers gathered for a baptism. I wondered what they thought of us as we passed by. Did they see friends enjoying a Sunday afternoon in Missoula? Did they judge us because we were not on the shore banks with them? Did any of them see a palpable sign of God's grace—unexpected, unassuming, uncommon—twirling like twigs on the river under a mottled sky?

What an uncommon gift to find full welcome, unconditional embrace and nonjudgmental acceptance! Too often the church fails to embody such authentic hospitality.

Some day I expect that Keith will meet this supper club he unknowingly started. He plans on visiting us. When he does, I will tell him again (as I am already doing here) that he was a vehicle for God's grace in my life and those around me. I can only hope our denomination will be stirred by as bracing words of the Spirit as those Keith offered me and so notice the grace that floats by us unannounced.

Tobin Miller Shearer lives in Missoula, Mont.

Trying to prove or disprove the existence of God no longer appeals to students; they would rather experience God.

There is much in the world to cause concern. Yet we find hope from a source that might surprise many people. That source of hope is young adults; at least many of those with whom we have come into contact in our teaching at Hesston (Kan.) College and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., both colleges of Mennonite Church USA.

Young adults

We stand amazed in their presence

by Dwight E. Roth and Donald Clymer

This generation of young adults brings hope to two Mennonite teachers.

It is common for older people to talk condescendingly about young adults. It is an age-old practice that goes back as far as the Greek and Roman empires (Bertman, see box on page 25). Today this criticism primarily has to do with how young people are influenced by electronic technology and popular culture. The current generational divide, however, seems to be deeper and more profound than normal.

After 30 years as faculty members at Hesston College and Eastern Mennonite University, we have taught thousands of students. The current group of students is, however, generally a different kind of student than we have encountered previously. This difference results from completely shifting ways of viewing reality and interpreting experience.

In spite of the fears of many, we find in this difference a source of great hope. This hope can be found in three specific areas. First, many of our students are attuned to mystery and awe; they have a remarkable sense of the transcendent. This reflects a noticeable shift in the psyche of our times, embedded in the unconscious of this generation of students. The religion of materialistic science, which since the Renaissance sought to explain everything by formulae and cause and effect, is breaking down. Life can no longer be interpreted in either/or terms. Ambiguity and mystery are the result. Young people are venturing into this ambiguity in search of an identity that is rarely recognized in the modern world of scientific materialism.

Because of this mystery and ambiguity, trying to prove or disprove the existence of God no longer appeals to students; they would rather experience God. Carl G. Jung, the renowned Swiss psychiatrist who anticipated the spirituality of current young people, was asked in a 1957 BBC interview by John Freeman if he believed in God. "I don't need to believe in God," he said, pausing to let his answer take effect. "I know God" (Dunne). Jung's answer describes a shift from what has been termed the modern age to postmodern thinking; the shift from propositional belief and pat formulae of faith to a knowing or an experience of God. This God becomes known even though the experience is shrouded in mystery.

In order to experience God, students are

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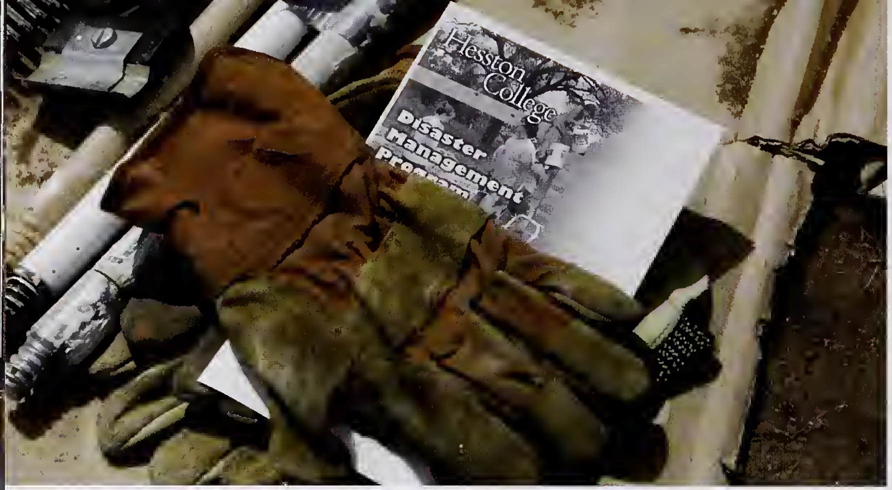


Jerry Holsopple—Hesston College

more open to ancient spirituality, which listens for and meditates on the voice of God. "I clearly heard my name," said one student. "The voice was a loud and obvious whisper, no one around me could have missed it. Yet they all thought I was freaking out. Whether or not anyone else believed me, I know that God called *my* name and spoke to *me*, and I have felt my faith grow so much because of this." While our generation, steeped in scientific reasoning, may laugh this off as either a hallucination or a coincidence, young adults look for signs from God.

In order to become more connected, today's students openly express their weaknesses—their mental, physical and emotional struggles.

When asked its meaning, a young man on campus with a tattoo responded, "It symbolizes the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse as seen in the Book of Revelation. It reminds me of the limits of humanity, of my mortality. It reminds me to live life fully." While our generation may criticize the excess of using a tattoo to attract attention, the student has a constant reminder to reflect on the meaning of life and its fragile nature. We find this desire to experience God and the mystery of transcendence exhibited by our students to be a sign of hope and stand amazed in their presence.

Second, our students are familiar with the needs of our world and are responding accordingly. We have watched as students have become more service-oriented and caring for something larger than themselves. Many students visit frail elders in local nursing homes, work with agencies that deal with immigration, or work in homeless shelters and find that they receive more than what they give the elders, the immigrants or the homeless. In their working with "the least of these" (Matthew 25:35), they see not only Jesus but themselves. "We are called to live and work for others," wrote a student working with an immigration agency. "It is through working for others that we encounter our own humanity and God's will for the world."

According to a recent article in the journal *Presence*, today's young adults are "interested in social justice." As such, they want to "connect their own struggles and issues with larger concerns of the world" (Campbell). "I believe as Christians it is our central purpose to live and work for others," said a student. "It is through engaging in mutually transformative relationships that we truly demonstrate God's love." In this desire to work for something greater than themselves, we see hope and stand amazed in their presence.

Finally, we see an increased desire for authentic community. This flies in the face of the glorified individualism of our culture, another carryover from the Renaissance. Like the religion of science, the myth of the individual doing everything alone is breaking down. "The gospel calls us to reject our independence and self-centeredness," said a student. "We must sacrifice our own dreams to help other people realize theirs."

Today's young adults have inherited from us a world full of brokenness resulting from this individualism—family breakups, cutoffs, violence in schools, suicides of close friends, psychological maladies—not to mention the brokenness of wars and environment. From this brokenness many of our young adults are in pain. But in the depth of their pain, many young people are taking steps of growth through a commitment to spirituality and community.

How often we have heard students say, "Get real." While reading students' reflections in various settings, we have experienced the depth of their sharing, the genuineness of their brokenness and their desire to do something about it. A survey of over 100,000 college students by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute found that "75 percent of current college students are trying to figure out how to make their lives more connected, integrated and spiritual" (Campbell).

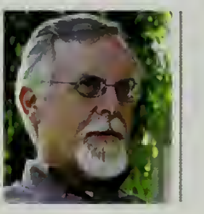
In order to become more connected, today's students openly express their weaknesses—their mental, physical and emotional struggles—something our generation kept as hidden as possible. This kind of openness allows community to develop, something young adults long for in a church—a church that deals with the real issues of life, not just wearing Sunday suits and smiles. "When one [of our group] is in pain or in distress or grieving, we surround them," reported a group of young adults. "When someone is ill, we bring food, clean their house, go to the grocery store for them. When we experience pain or sorrow, we pray for each other, surrounding the individual and laying on our hands."

Despite the concern that electronic technology is minimizing interpersonal skills of young people, we find many students and young adults have an unusual ability to listen to others and empathize. They show a desire to form authentic relationships in which honest disclosure with peers can encourage trust, connection and safety. "We are called to live and work for others," wrote a student. "It is through working for others and the relationships we make with them that we encounter our own humanity."

This openness and empathy is manifest in many new forms of church that are developing. Brian McClaren, guru of the "emerging church" movement states, "Postmoderns are at the beginning stages of moving away from the hyperindividualism of high modernity and toward a bringing of the self and society together in new configurations" (Sweet). These configurations are more communal. In one local church, a Sunday school class for young adults meets not only on Sunday mornings but every other Wednesday evening, along with frequent potlucks and campouts. "Our Sunday school class relates to each other during times of joy, celebration, disappointment, pain, the mundane," they said. "We create spaces to ask hard questions related to our faith. We want to know what it means to be church, to follow Jesus. We want to extend Jesus' love to each other and beyond." This is community. In this desire to work for community rather than individualism, we see hope and stand amazed in their presence.

Young adults face a complex world, a world they did not create. They face many challenges, perhaps the most glaring being the excesses stemming from the most materialistic and unspiritual society that the world has ever known. These spiritual young people need and want the abiding care of their elders as they seek healthy, Christ-oriented alternatives to these excesses. Are we ready to meet these challenges?

As we listen to news in our media, it seems the larger society right now contains more than a few aspects of a nightmare. In contrast, many of our students are examples of wonderful dreams that are awake—waking us with hopes of a brighter world for tomorrow. We stand amazed in their presence.



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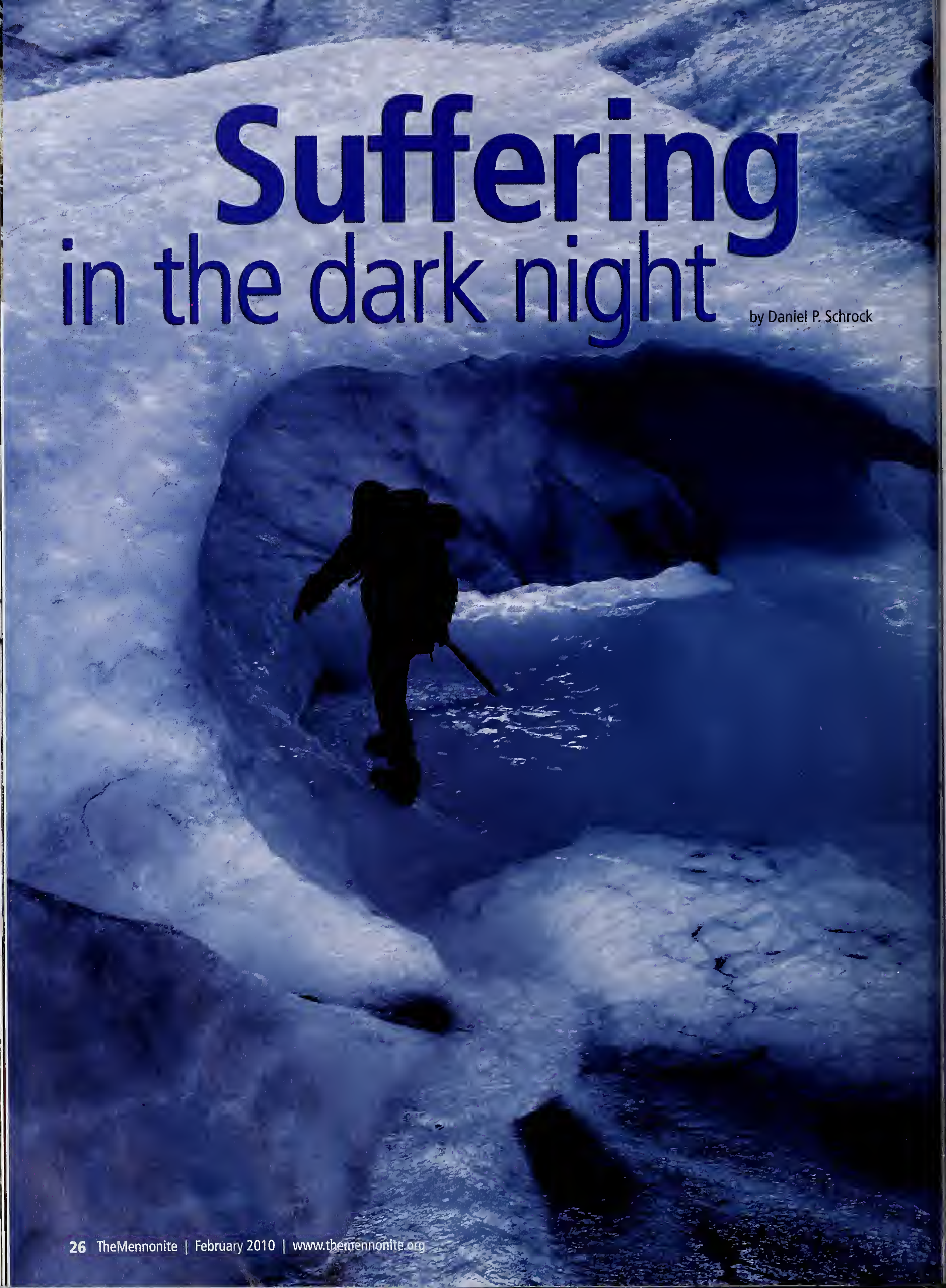
Suffering in the dark night

by Daniel P. Schrock



God's apparent absence may be the beginning of experiencing God's presence more deeply.

Heather, the successful pastor at Plum Ridge Church, had for a long time experienced an intimate relationship with God. But halfway through her sixth year at Plum Ridge, she was plunged into a cavernous dark night. All three signs of the dark night appeared: She could no longer pray in her usual ways, her spiritual life felt dry and empty, and she yearned for God's love with all the depths of her being.

The dark night took Heather into a crisis of faith unlike anything she had known before. It felt like God had disappeared. While she wanted to believe that God was still working in her life and the lives of her congregants, she could not bring herself to believe it. When she stood behind the pulpit to preach, pray and lead worship, she felt like a robot, mouthing the words but having no more soul than an Intel processor running a giant but mostly empty hard drive, whirling without purpose.

From all that people in the congregation could tell, Heather was still the caring, effective and diligent pastor they had always known. Yet for Heather, church life was hollow. Why do we work so hard at trying to be the church? she wondered to herself. How worthwhile is all this frenetic activity—the committees, the potluck meals, the ceaseless stream of announcements, the fund-raising, the hospital visits, the endless cycles of Advent and Lent and all the other busyness of church life? Is this really what God wants us to be about?

In her personal life, Heather could no longer pray with conviction. Words, in fact, would not come at all. For years her favorite place to pray had been the garden in her back yard, where she could sit beside a fountain surrounded by native flowers, bushes and grasses. This garden, however, now felt like an empty desert. When she cracked open her Bible, she no longer found meaning in her favorite passages about creation, such as Psalms 65 and 104. In her dark night she turned instead to Job, finding peevish solace in his complaint about God's absence (see Job 23:2-5, 8-9).

Heather realized that these attachments had become greedy gods that impoverished her ability to worship God alone.

After several months, wordless frustration turned to fury at God for leaving her. One afternoon in the depth of anger she stood in her yard facing the mountains in the distance, and using the words of the psalmist, yelled at the top of her voice: "Rouse yourself. Why do you sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not cast [me] off forever. Why do you hide your face?" (Psalm 44:23-24).

Eventually the anger dissipated, and Heather settled into frigidity. The image that came to her was of being alone in the Antarctic, walking aimlessly in a blinding snowstorm, hearing nothing but howling wind, feeling nothing but bitter cold. Though she wanted God badly, God seemed to care nothing for her. "My God, my God," she mourned, "why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?" (Psalm 22:1).

Heather's dark night lasted 11 years. At various times her inner suffering was so intense that she almost left the Christian faith altogether. Had it not been for the sympathy and support of her husband, she might have done just that. But ▶

with great effort, she persisted.

Toward the end of the 11 years, Heather slowly realized that the dark night was spiritually cleansing her in a deep way. She saw that she had been obsessively attached to success, to her self-image as a competent person, to her unusual ability to develop caring relationships and to the honeymoon of her first six years at Plum Ridge. She realized that these attachments had become greedy gods that impoverished her ability to worship God alone.

Most of all, Heather perceived that her faith was being reassembled into something more radical. Gone was the old assumption that her emotional state accurately measured the presence or absence of God. She began to see that Christian discipleship sometimes means sheer, dogged perseverance through the intense suffering of emotional emptiness, intellectual obscurity and spiritual deprivation.

Not every form of suffering becomes a dark night, though every dark night includes some suffering.

One day, near the end of her 11-year ordeal, Heather read Jesus' parable of the pearl: "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46).

These words suddenly gave her fresh insight, and she wrote in her journal: "This parable describes what's happened to me over the last decade. I'm the merchant, except I didn't choose to sell the pearls of my old faith so I could buy this 'one pearl of great value.' God made me sell those inferior pearls, and I kicked and screamed most of the time. I now see that the pearls I thought were so precious were in fact cheap costume jewelry: my hope for numerical and programmatic success, my reputation in the community, my emotional highs that once felt so 'spiritual' and my thin faith.

"Now I see that hidden in the soil of my life was a more beautiful pearl that came as a gift from God. I cannot put a price on its value because no money on earth could buy it. It came to me after intense suffering that I didn't ask for and wouldn't want to go through again. Yet now that God has given me such a luminous pearl, I wouldn't trade it for anything. This pearl of faith glows with the light of Christ, impelling me to radical service—not for my glory but for the glory of Christ."

The dark night and suffering: The suffering of the dark night can come to us through outward suffering such as debilitating illness, public humiliation, the death of a friend or other afflictions that life brings us. I am often asked whether God causes outward suffering such as hurricanes, cancer, war or traffic accidents. No, these happen because of how the natural world sometimes operates (hurricanes), because our bodies malfunction (cancer), because of human greed for power (war) or because of human error (traffic accidents). God remains with us through these events, offering us comfort and hope.

However, God may use these external sufferings as an opportunity to lead us inwardly into a dark night that purifies our faith—or God might not use them to initiate a dark night. Our outward suffering may lead to a dark night, or it may not. Not every form of suffering becomes a dark night, though every dark night includes some suffering.

The suffering of our dark night may be purely internal, as it was for Heather, who entered the night while being outwardly successful. In cases like hers, our suffering comes precisely because it seems that God no longer cares for us. We feel bereft of God's love and find ourselves walking through the valley of dogged perseverance. In this situation, will we maintain our commitment to Christ when there are no rewards? Will we persist in the journey of faith when we see no light ahead? Stripped of the spiritual comforts and assurances that once sustained us, will we let pure faith carry us forward?

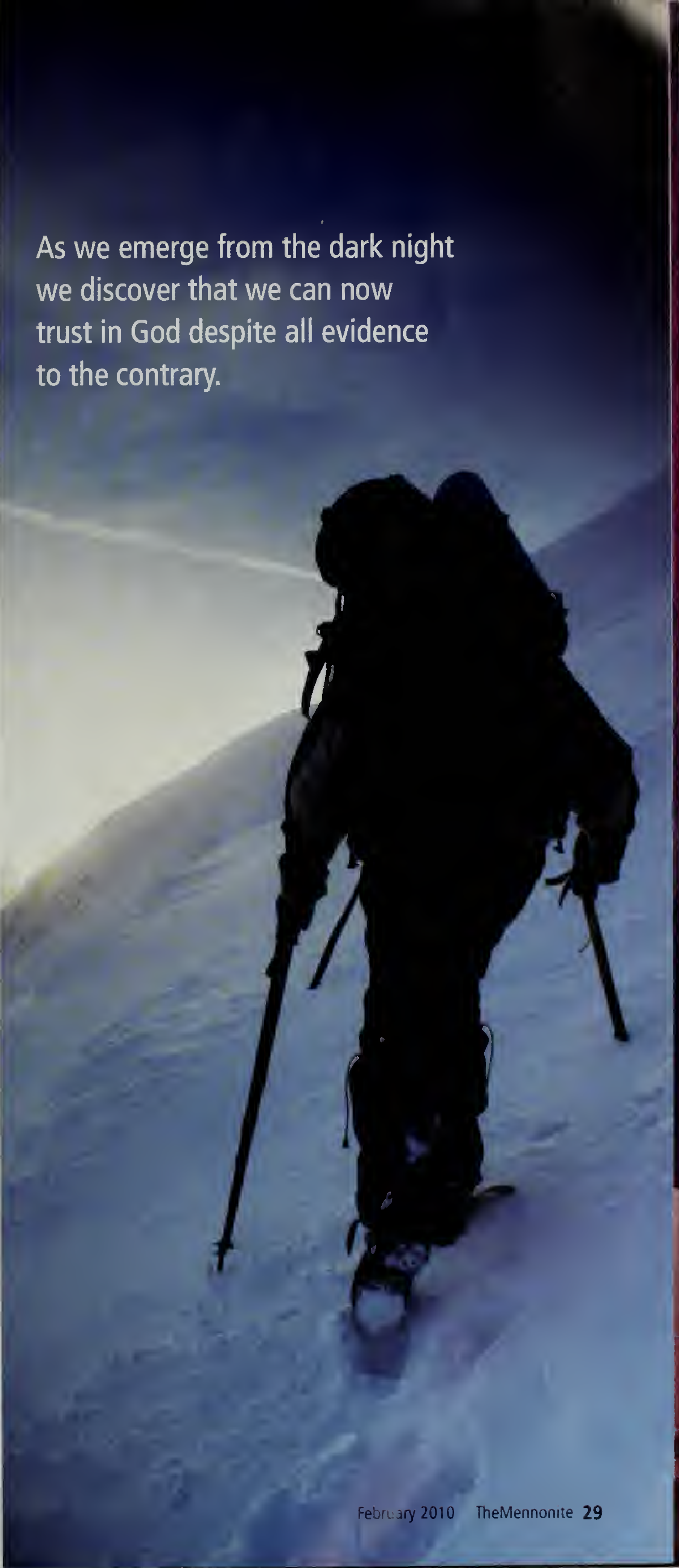
The gift of pure faith: Heather's dark night was longer than most. After 11 years of sticking with a God whose presence she could not sense, she emerged from the valley of dogged perseverance, her fidelity to God strengthened. Early in the dark night she thought she had lost God, but later she discovered what she really lost were her false illusions about God. She discovered that God guides us through suffering to the pearl of inestimable worth.

This pearl is pure faith. Through the suffering of the dark night, we come to a place of sheer faith, stripped to its bare knuckles. God becomes paramount because everything else is taken away from us: our false self-image, our vaporous dreams, our petty preoccupations. We learn that even if God seems to forsake us (which God never does), we have no one else to turn to except God. God becomes our all.

As we emerge from the dark night we discover that we can now trust in God despite all evidence to the contrary. Our new trust is not so much a trust in God's promises but a trust in God as a person. With this trust woven into the fiber of our being, we no longer need to understand everything about Christian faith. We can handle mystery, spiritual paradox and further trials without them shaking our trust in the fidelity of God.

What Tim saw: The dark night transforms our faith in ways that others may notice. Tim, Heather's husband, noticed three new things about her after those 11 years. First, he realized that she had more capacity to wait peacefully with other people who were suffering. Second, he noticed in her an overriding desire to do the right thing, regardless of how it might affect her reputation. And third, he detected in her the flowering of a qualitatively new relationship with God. When Tim shared this last observation with her, Heather replied, "Yes, I would say that because of the dark night, God has now become my friend."

Daniel P. Schrock is a pastor at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and a spiritual director. This article is adapted from his book The Dark Night: A Gift of God *(Herald Press, 2009). You may contact him through his Web site, www.danschrock.org. (The story of Heather is a composite of many people's experiences.)*



As we emerge from the dark night we discover that we can now trust in God despite all evidence to the contrary.

Dreamstime.com

I used to feel impatient when I stood in line at the grocery store or waited to get off a plane. On good days, I zoned out. On bad days, I wondered why the people in the front of the line were so slow.

Meditating on the run

by Jan Johnson

When Scripture shapes our thoughts, we are more likely to act on it.

Things began to change when I took my energy to the interesting place of prayer. In the supermarket line, for example, I often pray Psalm 23: Thank you, O God, that you are my shepherd. Thank you that I really do have everything I need even when I crave more. Thank you that being in this store is one way you provide those things. I long for still waters and green pastures with you—help me experience that this minute, even while standing in line. I can ignore these magazine covers and gadgets by the checkout line and focus on how you long to restore my soul.

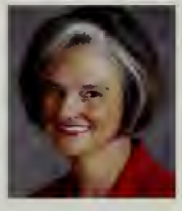
We may set out only to fill our time positively, but we find to our surprise that we have interacted with God and sensed more joy within.

Meditating in this informal way results in prayer conversations that can occur anywhere. These back-and-forth prayers are caught up in the language and pattern of Scripture and become a way God changes us. Praying the 23rd Psalm, for example, helps us become people who believe God is providing everything we need (well, almost). Such praying makes us active participants in how God increases our faith.

Meditating on the run is not irreverent but a way of surrendering more of the moments of life to God and recognizing God as our companion throughout the day. This is important because we pick up things from those we spend time with—perhaps their accent or odd laugh. In the same way, as we hear God speak to us in Scripture (even in nonreligious, everyday moments), God's words and ideas invade our mind until we begin thinking more the way God thinks. God's ways rub off on us. We may set out only to fill our time positively, but we find to our surprise that we have interacted with God and sensed more joy within.

When Scripture shapes our thoughts, we are more likely to act on it. Because this meditation occurs in a relaxed, everyday setting, the truth is more likely to become embedded in everyday thoughts and actions. Trusting God begins to sound normal, not just something a spiritually elite person would do. Working with Scripture in odd moments, such as waiting in line, is a concrete way of affirming that I really want God to permeate my life.

On a certain leg of my morning bike ride, for example, I started praying for several friends. Then I decided I wanted to pray more substantively so I memorized phrases from a prayer in Ephesians. I liked praying for these people that they would be strengthened in their inner being (instead of feeling so incapable and ineffective), that they would be rooted and grounded in love (in every difficult conversation), that they would comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ (and pass that love to others 3:16-21). I began praying this for me, too.



Jan Johnson is the author of Savoring God's Word, *from which this article is adapted, and the retreat guide Trusting God: Psalm 23.*

Getting started

How do we start such praying-meditating on the run? Take a passage that impresses you or meets a deep need. Maybe you've heard it taught in a class or preached in a sermon. You can start by copying it or printing it from your computer in 20-point type. The large print works well not only because it's easier to read but because there's something about letting the eyes feast on the individual words and drink them in slowly.

While hiking, I often carry a printed-out passage with me to ponder as I move along. I may add to it or rephrase it by substituting words that fit me:

"If an army (questioner/grouchy person) encamps against me, my heart shall not fail.

If war (intimidating people/a headache) rise(s) up against me, yet will I be confident."

Working through Psalm 27:3 this way helps me not be defensive or take things personally. It frees me to love the person in front of me without fear of what he or she is up to. Then I pause on my bike and pick up the next line.

Such conversation with God all day long brings a new quality to life. One feels that God really is a constant companion, the Shepherd of one's soul.—*Jan Johnson*

Revealing**prayers**

by Tammy Darling

Prayers are revealing. The Pharisee and the tax collector prayed two different prayers; both revealed the heart of the one speaking them. Likewise, our prayers reveal our hearts, whether or not those prayers are spoken out loud.

Our prayers often reveal attitudes that are not Christlike.

Praying with a right attitude doesn't just happen. It occurs bit by bit as we become increasingly like Jesus.

It's not always easy for me to pray with a right attitude. Many of my prayers seem to revolve around what I want or need, as though the world revolved around me.

I tend to prefer a comfortable life—a smooth road. When the path gets rocky, I cry out for God to make it smoother—even though I know that it is the difficulties in life that build character.

Yet my initial impulse is to ask God to make it all go away. James tells us, however, that we are to "count it all joy" (James 1:2). Instead of whining to God to make it all better, I should be asking for his grace to endure while he has his perfect way with me. I am learning to pray that Romans 8:28 will be worked out in my life.

Because I am shy, I am often hesitant to pray out loud. To be honest, I'm afraid I'll stammer or say something stupid or even theologically incorrect. In times past, I have even critiqued the prayers of others. Now I'm afraid others will do the same to me.

I have repented of such foolishness. Instead I am trying to rely on the Holy Spirit for the words I speak instead of attempting to impress others with my choice of words. True prayers come from the heart, not the mind.

As others are praying, I am making a concentrated effort to join in agreement with them instead of simply listening to what they say and how they say it.

I have also found that the more Scripture I memorize the more Scripture comes out as I am praying. Someone once told me that we can know we are praying according to God's will when we are praying his Word.

Because so many of my past prayers have been selfish in nature, I am trying to pray God's Word for the situation, knowing that it may not bring the result I would like but that it will bring God's result. I am trying to trust that God's answer is his best for me even if I can't see it at the time.

I must confess that I have gone to God in prayer to "thank" him for a certain accomplishment when my inner motive was to chalk up some points for myself. I wanted to make sure he was aware of what I had done—as if he didn't know already, including my true motive for coming to him.

There have been other times, however, that I have been so blown away by what he did through me that my prayer was nothing but humble gratitude. Because I was so overwhelmed, my actual words were few yet he knew my heart was pure.

A right attitude when praying is the first step to ensuring that I am praying according to God's will.

Sometimes my prayers reveal my wrong perceptions of God. For example, if I truly believe that God is good all the time, my prayers would reflect that. However, if I catch myself praying in a way that reveals bitterness that God didn't prevent a certain circumstance from happening, then I can clearly see that I'm not completely convinced that God really is good all the time.

As I continue this journey of faith, I want my prayers to reveal my Christlikeness. A right attitude when praying is the first step to ensuring that I am praying according to God's will. As I pray, I am increasingly aware of what those prayers are revealing—and taking some time to deal with what I discover.

Tammy Darling lives in Three Springs, Pa.

Praying for my kids

by Sara Breese McCoy

How I wage spiritual warfare on their behalf

As a young girl in junior high Sunday school class I recall being introduced to the shocking and tragic account in Ezekiel 22 of God's search throughout Israel for someone who might intercede on behalf of his wayward people. When no one could be found to "stand in the gap" before him, he poured out judgment on sin. Later, as a college student, I was touched by Moses' prayer in Exodus 32 that spared the people destruction after they dabbled in idolatry. During nightly devotions with my husband, I read in Job 42 that God's anger at the three miserable comforters was assuaged when Job offered a burnt sacrifice and prayed for his friends at God's command. The message for me was clear: Praying for others works.

I am concerned about the effect a sinful world will have on my children's resolve to live a consistent Christian life that truly glorifies God.

I am the mother of four children ranging in age from six months to 10 years. Like most Christian parents I am concerned about the effect a sinful world will have on their resolve to live a consistent Christian life that truly glorifies God. The Bible has reinforced to me what was already obvious: Believers have a responsibility to intercede for their kids. Most at least occasionally call their children's names in prayer, but what does it really take to reach God for those he has entrusted to us? Here are four keys I rely on for effective spiritual warfare on behalf of the most precious thing in the world to me.

1. Consistency

For me, hit-and-miss praying rarely does the job. Intercession is a spiritual discipline that requires motivation and dedication. Luke 18:1 says we are "to pray always and not to lose heart." Just as you must water a garden or go to school consistently over an extended period of time for best results, so I pray for my kids day after day without stopping. Perhaps this is what Paul meant in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 when he wrote, "Pray without ceasing." When a parent tirelessly goes before the Father year upon year, the power unleashed on behalf of the child becomes a mighty, unstoppable force that pulls down strongholds and brings protection and victory.

2. Fervency

James 5:16 (KJV) speaks of "effectual fervent prayer." Jesus himself prayed so earnestly before going to the cross that he sweat great drops of blood (Luke 22:44). Successful prayers must be heartfelt, sincere, determined and serious. It is difficult for me to do spiritual battle in intercession if I am distracted, bored, in a hurry or not fully convinced of the necessity of prayer. I have asked God to give me a burden for my children's spiritual welfare that will burn within my heart like a consuming fire and compel me to pray with zeal. I believe that results will be forthcoming.

3. Specificity

"God, please keep your hand on my kids" sounds nice, but it is not a directed, goal-oriented prayer. I think long-term. I want my 3-year-old to marry the right person someday. I hope my first grader chooses the college or vocation that God has for him. And then there's moral chastity. In today's corrupt society, it is critical for me to begin praying about my children's sexual purity now—years before they reach adolescence. Remember that Jesus taught his disciples to say, "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13 KJV). Following are the specific prayers I plan to keep offering up for many more years.

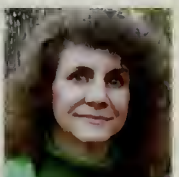
- For my children to be protected from accidents, diseases and people who would prey upon them.
- For my younger children to become Christians as soon as they are old enough to be responsible for making that decision.
- For my children to select friends that will encourage them to live for God.
- For my children to be morally pure and protected from premarital/extramarital sexual temptations.
- For my children to be protected from rebellion as they approach the teen years.
- For my children to be placed in the classrooms of the right teachers, who can positively influence them.
- For my children to choose the right jobs, careers, college majors or vocations.
- For my children to be producers in God's kingdom and not just takers.
- For the right mate for each of my children.
- For myself as a parent to be given wisdom to train, teach and discipline my children properly.
- For myself as a parent to set a consistent and Christlike example.

4. Praying together

My kids seem to learn from the example I set, and prayer is no different. I need to pray for them privately, telling God intimate concerns and fears. However, it seems to encourage the kids to live the best they can when I make a daily habit of praying for them in front of them. Our best time is beside the front door before the school bus comes in the morning. The two older ones stand there holding lunch boxes and backpacks, and the 3-year-old huddles with us still dressed in feet pajamas. We pray about the little girl in my son's class who says her folks won't take her to church and who checked a Bible out of the library. We pray about my daughter's standardized exams. We ask God to give the kids a chance to do good things for other people and be a light for him. We ask for protection for their daddy as he commutes to and from his job. Since my husband has already left for work when they wake up, he prays with them at night in their rooms before bed. Someday, when they are grown and out of the house, I want them to have these memories burned into their hearts to strengthen them and spur them on to pray for themselves and their children.

Even if your kids are already grown and on their own, it is not too late to begin consistent intercession before God on their behalf.

Even if your kids are already grown and on their own, it is not too late to begin consistent intercession before God on their behalf. I once heard Pastor John Hagee of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, say on television: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today." I encourage you not to waste even one minute regretting what should have been done in the past. Determine today to use the knowledge you now have to wage spiritual warfare for the souls of your children and/or grandchildren. Time-consuming and sometimes exhausting? Yes. But I assure you that you will never make a better investment that pays higher dividends in your entire life.



Sarah Breese McCoy lives in Owasso, Okla.

A pastor's plan

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is conference minister for Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

I resolve in this new year to enter as boldly as possible into the life of the local, regional and global Mennonite church. This will involve some fairly dramatic commitments and some equally dramatic releases.

Why not make a personal yearly spiritual accountability plan? In fact, all pastors in Western District Conference (WDC) are asked to fill out just such a form and submit it to their conference minister. It asks credentialed pastors to look ahead and think carefully (with specific goals and practices) how they will minister in the following areas:

- personal relationship with God and spiritual vitality;
- relationship with family and significant others;
- stewardship of finances and the environment;
- physical, mental and emotional health;
- identity in ministry and functioning in ministry.

1. Most pastors are incredibly dedicated. They take this annual exercise seriously. Some take a day of retreat to review the past year and plan for the next one. Some simply repeat what they wrote the year before; some confess they didn't follow the practices they prescribed for themselves. Others severely alter their plans due to an unanticipated ministry placement change, a pending child's graduation or a sabbatical. Each year is different.

Why not make a personal yearly spiritual accountability plan?

I resolve to secure my personal relationship with God in more intentional ways. I will devote one day per quarter to a silent retreat while listening for the Spirit's nudging. I will focus weekly on the lectionary readings as a scriptural discipline and pray daily for my family, my congregation, my pastors and one pressing justice issue.

2. Many pastors report that they want to strengthen friendships with those outside their congregation. Some suggest a weekly date night with their spouse or significant other. Most chide themselves for overwork and vow to limit work for the church to 50 hours per week. Many pastors tithe to their local congregations. One pastor is stretching to a 40 percent income tithe; another is adding 1 percent per year in ministry. The most common financial vow is the 10 percent to their local congregations, with an offering of 5 percent to other causes. Most recycle faithfully.

I, too, commit myself to a 50-hour work week, to a weekly date night with Richard (my husband) and a weekly contact (by phone) with our faraway daughter and my mother. We will continue our 10- to 20-percent tithe to our local congregation, our area conference and mostly Mennonite-related organizations. I will pare down, consume less. (I hope our congregations will "prune" some of their committees, use less plastic products and contribute more generously.)

3. I hear almost all pastors yearn to lose weight, exercise more and meditate frequently. One reported that a goal of last year to lose 40 pounds was way too ambitious, since he missed it by 38 pounds. I noted his new goal: "Lose five pounds." Some vowed to run marathons (and did); some planned to bike across the state (and did). Many wish their bodies wouldn't be such an obvious barometer of their stress levels.

I commit myself to walking two miles per day at least five days a week—mostly with Richard as a companion walker. I will reduce sweets (everything but chocolate) and monitor stress. In fact, as I transition to semiretirement this year, I will take note of physical changes and mental stress and add more exercise and more prayer. I will sleep an eight-hour night.

4. Identity as a ministering person means listening to a pastor-peer group when giving and receiving counsel. It means having an annual evaluation with a small leadership group from the congregation or a supervisor and an in-depth review every three or four years.

As I complete my tenure as WDC conference minister in late summer, I commit myself to a continuing discipline of meeting regularly with a spiritual director to share my spiritual wonderings and my yearnings in practical ministry. I will also meet with my pastor every six months to assist me in meaningful congregational participation.

Maybe a yearly accountability plan is a good tool for all Christians. TM

Becoming e-families but not bodies in vats

It's time, Dad," my daughter Kristy said. "You need to get on Facebook." Soon there I was on Facebook, obedient if bewildered.

Not long ago, Jose and I went out to breakfast. Jose, younger than Kristy, fulminated against Facebook. And when people ask why he's late to a meeting, he told me, he informs them he doesn't track meetings set up by email. Gatherings with family and friends appall Jose: everybody on cells and laptops tapping and thumbing and tweeting and text-text-texting away, then looking up just long enough to be in photos uploaded instantly to Facebook so all around the world people at their respective gatherings can watch each other taking photo breaks from their tap-thumb-tweet-texting.

So there we have it. Millions plugged into the Internet hive, and it wouldn't surprise me to learn that, as in a science fiction movie, we're in vats being fed by robots while our brains feed us the illusion that we can still actually see, touch, hear, taste and smell a physical world.

I was resonating right along with Jose, righteously proud of never having learned to text on my prehistoric 2003 cell phone. This is why my daughters know to text me in such a way that I can use autorespond to send back either "answer is yes" or "answer is no."

Then I remembered the day my brothers and I were on our first trip ever with each other as adults. First thing we did at our B&B was pull out laptops. Pretty soon one brother was emailing photos of the trip to the other brothers, cc. to our families so they could all be jealous of—I mean share in—our adventures. In a few minutes we started getting back alarmed messages from spouses and children loving the pictures but wondering if we really were in the same room emailing each other instead of talking.

Yes, it was sick. It was also fun to be in that room linked not only to each other but also family wherever any of us were. So now I'm confused. Bad e-world, I was thinking, with Jose. But maybe good e-world, too?

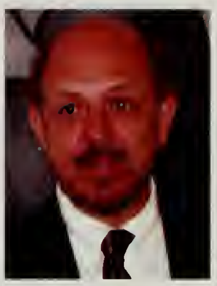
Take my last birthday. I had half-forgotten it myself, but when I logged onto Facebook that morning, flooding in came "Happy Birthdays" from family and friends near and far, often farther than nearer, since many Facebook friends go back to college days or way way back. Some go back even to Triqueland in Mexico, where I was a missionary kid, and our family and theirs visited there in the Oaxaca mountains of what was to them just home and to us a mystic land of fog and wonder.

I was embarrassed, given how ambivalent I am about Facebook, to realize what a glow those birthday wishes cast over my day. I couldn't quite believe I was catching myself thinking it, but I found the Hebrews 12:1 phrase "cloud of witnesses" running through my head. I felt surrounded that birthday by a Facebook cloud of witnesses. There were too many of them for me to remember, without looking at the list, who all of them were. Yet they represented such a cross-section of my relationships and life chapters past and present that I felt as if in some way they were all members, whether by blood or by faith and friendship and shared history, of one great extended e-family, cradling that day my entire life journey in supportive hands.

Jose is right. We are flirting with insanity as the e-world's tentacles spread everywhere. And maybe soon enough if not already our bodies will indeed lie in vats while our minds roam the universe.

I also can't quite shake the memory of our dear mother trying to pull us children from books out into fresh air. We just wanted our bodies to lie in the vats of their beds and maybe for Mom to feed the bodies sandwiches so our minds could roam book universes. Now books are those old-fashioned things threatened by the e-world, which makes this book lover and publisher sad. Yet books have themselves been blowing up prebook cultural patterns for centuries. Researchers are even finding that reading physically rewires our brains, as the e-world surely does, too. Books can be and do awful things. They can also bless us beyond measure.

We've learned to treat books as terrible and wonderful. I suspect we need to learn to treat the e-world the same way. So yes, when tap-thumb-tweet-text family and friends replace flesh-and-blood versions, tragedy is afoot. Yet maybe our e-families also are in their way real ones, even ones within which God is at work as e-families connect and cross-connect and nurture each other until at last truly they form a worldwide e-cloud of witnesses. TM



Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., is publisher of Cascadia Publishing House, LLC, editor of *DreamSeeker Magazine*, a pastor and speaker and a Facebook friend.

I was embarrassed, given how ambivalent I am about Facebook, to realize what a glow those birthday wishes cast over my day.

Denominational ministry team organizes

Mission Network, Executive Leadership collaborate to help congregations.

Churches need help finding pastors and resources to enrich congregational life. Some districts and area conferences want help with church planting, intercultural relations and other initiatives. Mennonite Mission Network and Executive Leadership have created a new way to provide these ministries.

This new model for denominational ministry, initiated last fall, has broadened and integrated leadership within Mennonite Church USA. Along with continuing to resource and coach area conferences in a variety of ways, the new Denominational Ministry Team now includes the areas of church planting, urban ministries, intercultural relations, and peace and justice.

The team will provide a more holistic approach for equipping church leaders for ministry. In the future the team may expand to include ministries of other agencies.

Denominational ministers will continue to serve Mennonite Church USA's calling system, which assists conference ministers in bringing together pastors and congregations. What's new to the Denominational Ministry Team is a theme of diversity. The team is initiating new ways to bring existing racial/ethnic groups, including Asian ministries, as well as peace and justice ministries, into the center of the denomination. The work and leaders of the Denominational Ministry Team include the following:

Denominational ministers: Lee Lever, Moundridge, Kan., provides overall leadership for the Denominational Ministry Team and is one of three denominational ministers. He also works with the Youth Ministry Leadership Team and with ministerial issues such as salary guidelines, ministerial polity and misconduct issues.

Nancy Kauffmann, Goshen, Ind., serves as a denominational minister, manages the call system for Mennonite Church USA, nurtures area conference ministers and serves as staff for the denomination's Leadership Discernment Committee.

Linford King, Lancaster, Pa., serves half-time as a denominational minister. He oversees the Ministry Inquiry Program, connects to the Mennonite Camping Association and the Anabaptist Disabilities Network and is a resource person for the Institute for Anabaptist Leaders.

Intercultural relations ministries: Glen Alexander Guyton, Yorktown, Va., denominational minister for intercultural relations, relates to the three constituency groups for intercultural relations: African-American Mennonite Association, Iglesia Menonita Hispana and Native Mennonite Ministries. Guyton facilitates communication among and between racial/ethnic people and others and ensures the constituency groups have equal access and opportunity.

Mennonite Church USA's denominational ministers include (from left): Glen Guyton, Lee Lever, Nancy Kauffmann, Glenn Balzer, Hugo Saucedo, Linford King, Susan Mark Landis and Mauricio Chenlo. Not pictured: Kuaying Teng, Shelley Buller, Deb Ratzlaff

Kuaying Teng, St. Catharines, Ont., is denominational minister of Asian ministries. He builds relationships among and resources Cambodian, Chinese, Hmong, Indonesian, Lao, Korean, Indian and Vietnamese Mennonite churches.

Church planting ministries: Mauricio Chenlo, Raleigh, N.C., denominational minister for church planting, relates to area conferences and leaders in initiating new churches. He is leading a church planting research project that will help the denomination collaborate strategically on church planting and leadership development.

Peace and justice ministries: Susan Mark Landis, Orrville, Ohio, serves as denominational minister for peace and justice. She consults with congregations, area conferences, racial/ethnic associations and staff to develop and enhance the peace and justice witness of Mennonite Church USA within a missional church.

Urban ministries: Hugo Saucedo and Glenn Balzer have begun work to lead an urban ministry study project for 2010. Saucedo, of San Antonio, Texas, is Mennonite Voluntary Service director. Balzer, of Denver, is national director for Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection.

Administrative support: Shelley Buller and Deb Ratzlaff work out of the Newton, Kan., offices of Mennonite Church USA. As executive assistant for the Denominational Ministry Team, Buller coordinates meeting plans, prepares reports and takes minutes. Ratzlaff, administrative assistant, provides support for Lever, Kauffmann, and King and more.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Peter Dyck leaves legacy of service

Storyteller, pastor and servant dies of cancer in January at age 95.

Peter J. Dyck—storyteller, Mennonite pastor, author and lifelong servant to people in need around the world—died of cancer on Jan. 4. He was 95 years old.

Dyck, who lived in Scottdale, Pa., is well known in Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Amish communities throughout Canada, Europe, Paraguay and the United States, especially for his work with Mennonite Russian refugees and with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Born in Lysanderhöh, Am Trakt, Russia, on Dec. 4, 1914, Dyck was a child when the Russian Revolution ushered in the start of the Soviet Union. At age 6, he almost died of typhoid and hunger that accompanied the Russian Famine of 1921.

Dyck and his family were rescued by food shipments sent from Mennonites in Canada and the United States, a kindness he would not forget. Six years later, his family, including eight siblings, fled Russia and settled in Saskatchewan.

Dyck attended the University of Saskatchewan and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College with a bachelor's in English in 1952. In June 1968, he completed his master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary, Chicago.

During World War II, he served with MCC in England. Motivating his decision to work with that organization was his memory of the food aid he received as a child. The food had come through a newly formed MCC.

"I knew these were people that do good. … They fed our family. They fed our community. Now they are asking me to go and do something like that for others? To me, it would almost have seemed immoral not to say yes," Dyck told author Robert Kreider, editor of *Interviews with Peter J. Dyck and Elfrieda Dyck.*

His decision to go was fortuitous not only for MCC but also for Dyck. In 1944, he married Elfrieda Klassen, a nurse who also was serving with MCC in England. She, too, was a Russian refugee who moved to Canada.

In 1946, the Dycks set up refugee camps in Germany for thousands of Mennonites who had fled the Soviet Union. Over time, they led 5,500 Mennonites by boat to South America, mostly to Paraguay. This experience provided content for Dyck's stories and was the basis of the book *Up From the Rubble*, which he coauthored with Elfrieda.

"Peter was a key voice in helping MCC supporters in Canada and the United States be aware of need in the world," says Herman Bontrager, chair of the MCC board of directors. "Peter and Elfrieda were bridges in that they built linkages and relationships across continents."

From 1950 to 1957, Dyck served as pastor of Eden Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kan. The Dycks returned to Germany with their two daughters, Ruth and Rebecca, to direct the MCC program there and in North Africa for the next 10 years.

Peter Dyck then moved into an administrative position with MCC in Akron, Pa., where he was responsible for East-West relations in the midst of the Cold War.

For two decades after his "retirement" from MCC in 1981, Dyck traveled to speak at churches, schools and retreats. He was well-known among Amish and Mennonites for his inspiring stories and was popular among young people at Mennonite high schools and colleges in the 1970s and 1980s for his ability to engage them. At 90, he could still pack auditoriums.

Dyck authored five more books. Three were children's books. He also wrote a collection of his stories, *Leap of Faith*, and a meditation on growing old gracefully, *Getting Home Before Dark*. Dyck believed that credit for his efforts should be directed toward God, not him. "It is gratifying and also humbling to think that [God's] purposes are accomplished through ordinary people," he told Kreider.

Dyck donated his body to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, the last service he could perform for humankind.

In lieu of flowers and as a memorial tribute to his life of service, the family asks that contributions be made to the Peter J. Dyck Peace and Justice Scholarship at Goshen College. This scholarship joins Goshen's Elfrieda Klassen Dyck Compassionate Nursing Scholarship. For information about ways of donating, go to www.goshen.edu/give. To make an online contribution, click on "one-time credit card gift," choose the "other" box option for designation and type the fund name into the blank box.—*Linda Espenshade and Ed Nyce of Mennonite Central Committee*

Children work alongside Mennonite youth

Service evangelism bears fruit in underserved Columbus neighborhood.

Mennonite youth volunteer and work with children in Columbus, Ohio, during Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009.

Last summer, two little girls in one of Columbus, Ohio's, poorest neighborhoods looked out their window and saw a group of teenagers approaching the house.

Faith, 6, and Serenity, 5, live in a low-lying expanse of desolation appropriately called the Bottoms on the city's west side. The group's leader, an orange-clad volunteer from Agora Christian Services, came to the door and asked the girls' mother if she would like to have her yard cleaned of trash. The woman accepted the offer, and in a matter of minutes a service team from the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009 swarmed her yard, cleaned it and bagged the litter.

Cleaning up yards and befriending children has opened many doors.—Rich Bartholomew

Agora Christian Services is a Mennonite ministry that has served the residents of Columbus' west side since 1995 and now focuses on serving children. Before Convention 2009 last July, attendance at Agora's kids' meetings averaged 60-70 children each evening. Since the convention, 100-120 regularly attend.

Faith and Serenity joined in the cleanup with the youth. When their yard was finished and the group moved on to the neighbor's, the girls—with their mother's permission—stayed with the team and worked alongside. They quickly formed a bond with the group, and when it came time to part, the girls begged to stay.

Monica Koshmider, the team leader and Agora volunteer from Walnut Creek Mennonite Church in Holmes County, Ohio, said, "A child must live a really deprived life if a total stranger, after just a few minutes of showing them love and attention, produces such a dramatic response. The girls were heartbroken that we were leaving."

Scenes like this played out dozens of times during Convention 2009 in Columbus. Teams of Mennonite youth, totaling more than 600, spread out across the Bottoms and adjoining neighborhoods, led by Agora volunteers. They moved street by street, house to house, and offered yard work and made friends.

The story does not end here. Faith, Serenity and other children like them saw something new during those days: They witnessed young people serving with no thought of material reward, giving and asking nothing in return, and loving with no conditions.

Agora's director, Pastor Rich Bartholomew, says: "A personal relationship with Jesus Christ offers hope in the most desperate circumstances. Cleaning up yards and befriending children has opened many doors for the cleansing work of Christ in the people of the Bottoms. And it is this cleansing work of Christ alone that interrupts otherwise unstoppable generational cycles."

Agora Christian Services provides job training and educational support for older youth and holds weekly kids' meetings on Wednesday and Saturday evenings that are attended by neighborhood children ranging in age from toddler to teen.

Agora Christian Services is extending its ministry to children in 2010 with the opening of the Little Gems Early Education Center, which by the end of the year will be serving nearly 90 children and their families. For more information, go to www.agoraministries.org.—*Joel V. Copeland*

Mennonite Olympian has a heart of gold

An interview with speed skating champion Cindy Klassen, now featured on coin

In January 2006, I spoke with speed skater Cindy Klassen, who had grown up in my neighborhood and church. As we talked on the phone, I was struck by her gentleness, humility about her accomplishments and goals, genuine kindness toward others, and complete lack of antagonistic ambition. She quoted Psalm 16:8: "I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken."

I could see that the words she spoke about putting God first in her life and then trusting him with everything were not just church-speak; they genuinely came from the core of her being.

Cindy Klassen

"I don't have to worry about anything because it's all in God's hands," Klassen said.

I made the mistake of assuming that a person so meek could only achieve so much.

A few weeks later, I, along with the rest of Canada, found myself cheering and leaping, laughing and crying in front of the TV screen as this remarkable young woman won medal after medal in speed skating—five in all—at the Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy.

When I watched her cross the finish line ahead of Germany's Anni Friesinger to win the gold medal in the 1,500-meter speed skating race, I screamed until I fainted. I remembered this young woman had also said, "Well, I guess I am pretty competitive."

Klassen, whose name and face achieved instant international recognition at the Turin Olympics, proved just how much a person so meek can achieve. She went on from Turin to win the World Cup title in 3,000-meter speed skating and became the all-round world champion with gold medals in all four distances. Not surprisingly, she won the 2006 Lou Marsh Award as Canadian Athlete of the Year.

"I'm so grateful I'm allowed to be an athlete as a career," Cindy said. "I'm always thinking that I'm doing this for God. Then it makes it meaningful. I can't give God any less than my best." And her best means giving everything she has, every day, every time. "Each practice counts—every step, every push on the ice. ... I have to make it as perfect as possible."

Cindy's choice to put God first and give God the glory in times of achievement has been hard-won through times of difficulty. In 2003, just as her career was gaining momentum, a serious injury threatened to end it all. She couldn't race or train, and she didn't know if she would ever compete again. She came home to Winnipeg, Manitoba, to reconnect with her family.

With unexpected time on her hands, she immersed herself in Scripture. Cindy came out of that lull stronger than ever. She stormed back into international competition, winning titles and breaking records all the way to the podium at Turin.

Then in February 2008, Cindy abruptly left competition in Europe and rushed home to Winnipeg, where her sister Lisa had skidded off a bridge in her SUV and plummeted 15 meters to break through the ice of the Red River below.

"The church surrounded us with prayer," Cindy says. The family waited at the hospital day and night while Lisa fought to survive. Lisa not only survived but made a complete recovery.

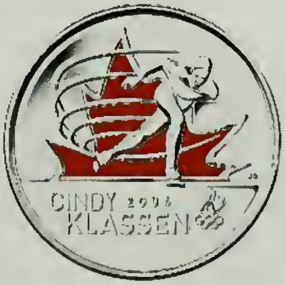
Now Cindy is again recovering from surgery and trusting God with her future. "My goal is just to make it to the [Winter] Olympics—just because I had knee surgery last year." She wants to skate in front of a home crowd in Vancouver, B.C. "To be part of the Olympics in Canada would be an honor."

Together with the bronze medal she won in the 2002 Winter Olympics in the 3,000-meter race, Cindy has won more Olympic medals than any other Canadian athlete—male or female—in any sport.

"I love the sport. I know that when I'm going out and enjoying it, then the pressure to succeed doesn't even exist. I'm having so much fun that I don't worry about outside pressure."

As she has all along, Cindy trusts God completely with her future. "If I give it my all," she says, "then the outcome is in God's hands."

Don't let the meekness fool you.—*Ingrid Koss*



Winnipeg Free Press

A rare event: Cindy Klassen is the only individual athlete to be commemorated in the Royal Canadian Mint's Olympic coin series. She's on the flip side of Queen Elizabeth on the new 25-cent piece released into circulation Jan. 5. Two teams, the 2002 men's and women's ice hockey teams, have been similarly immortalized.—*Winnipeg Free Press*

Mennonites agonize over Bolivian rape victims

Some call MCC to address abuse, MCC's offer to counsel victims rejected

The story of Mennonite men drugging and raping women on Old Colony Mennonite settlements in Bolivia hit the news all over the world last summer. Meanwhile, English-language Mennonite media have given it scant reportage as Mennonite groups struggle to respond appropriately—if at all.

"The silence is deafening," says Abe Warkentin, founder of *Die Mennonitische Post*, a German newspaper that connects Mennonites across the Americas. He "plead[s] with Mennonite Central Committee to address these problems."

Twelve men are accused of the 140 officially confirmed cases of rape at the 2,000-member Manitoba Colony in Bolivia. Anecdotal reports suggest such abuse is ongoing, affecting neighboring colonies as well.

Excommunication is the main form of discipline available to colony leaders. Colonists took a vigilante approach in response to circumstantial evidence against one man. After neighbors tied him to a tree by his arms with his feet dangling for nine hours, Franz Klassen did not recover movement in his arms and subsequently died.

Missionaries have been concerned about domestic abuse on the colonies for years, and *Kurze Nachrichten Aus Mexiko*, a Latin American news source, says a drugging-and-rape incident was reported five years ago. Family Life Network staff reported in 2000 about "the church in crisis" on Old Colony settlements in Mexico (home of the original Old Colony Bolivian settlers in 1967). In 2008, FLN staff said letters received from Old Colony teen listeners in Bolivia told of "addictions, depression and sexual abuse common in the colonies."

As yet, none of the Mennonite agencies that interact with the Old Colony Mennonites offers either a target response to the female victims of abuse or aid in dealing with the offenders.

Royden Loewen, chair of Mennonite studies at the University of Winnipeg, has a long history of studying Old Colony Mennonites in Canada and Latin America.

Loewen recognizes there is abuse in Old Colony homes but "in no greater percentage than any other society in the world." Referencing a 1991 study by Isaac Block which found 10 percent of Winnipeg Mennonites had experienced abuse, he says that we largely urban North American Mennonites "have ways of covering up our abusive situations," while the "isolated but more visible Old Colony Mennonites" are more vulnerable to disclosure.

Jacob and Helen Funk have been coordinators of Low German programming for FLN for the past 15 years.

"We know the problem of sexual and physical abuse is widespread in most if not all colonies in Bolivia," he wrote in an email to the *MB Herald*, in which he said colony leaders use "extreme adherence to tradition and legalism" to "control membership of the community and church."

Women often confide in Helen about abuse, but FLN programming does not specifically address the domestic abuse. However, Funk points to a women's shelter, primarily sponsored by the Evangelical Free Church of Canada.

MCC released "a call for understanding and prayer" on July 9, 2009, in response to the rapes. MCC Bolivia's offer of counseling for victims of abuse was rejected.

John Janzen, Low German coordinator for MCC Canada, says, "The colony leaders are taking a stand against this." He points to an ad the colony leaders took out in a Santa Cruz paper stating "we are sorry; we will try to regain lost ground; please remember we are not all like this" (loose translation).

"As Christians, we should have concern for both the victims and the perpetrators (men) who did this," Janzen says. "I see MCC in Bolivia striving to make things better."—*Karla Braun of* MB Herald *for Meetinghouse*

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MEDA sees peace dividend in youth program

Mennonite Economic Development Associates boosts financial literacy.

Wally Kroeker

Moroccan young people attending a focus group session to discuss their need for financial services.

A new program to boost employment for an exploding global youth population has been launched by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

Called YouthInvest, the job and business training program aims to train 50,000 young people in Morocco and Egypt. "The global population of young people is soaring, but job prospects lag far behind," says Kim Pityn, MEDA's vice president of international operations.

She cites United Nations data showing 46 percent of the world's population to be under age 25. In the last three years this segment grew 10.5 percent, but youth employment grew only 0.2 percent.

"Long-term joblessness among young people can lead to mass emigration, social unrest and entrenched cycles of poverty, leading to an increased susceptibility to recruitment by extremist groups," says Pityn.

YouthInvest aims to boost financial literacy and entrepreneurship among Moroccan and Egyptian young people (ages 15-24) by providing its own version of Business 101 training and helping them access financial services that until now have been out of their reach.

It will also help local microfinance institutions devise youth-centered financial services and work with banks to encourage youth-oriented savings accounts.

The goal is to prepare youth for successful entrepreneurship and employment by furnishing them with meaningful skills, work opportunities and integrated services.

The five-year, $5-million program, sponsored primarily by The MasterCard Foundation, got underway late in 2009, based in Casablanca.

While MEDA's program currently targets 50,000 youth, Pityn predicts that in the next three years an additional 150,000 can be reached with greater access to savings and credit, increased incomes and wider skill sets, helping them find safe, self-sustaining livelihoods either through entrepreneurship or employment.

A second phase is being set up in Egypt, and could be replicated in countries such as Jordan, Sudan and Yemen.—*Wally Kroeker of Mennonite Economic Development Associates*

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GOSHEN

Book explores images beyond warriors, monks

MPN releases books on men's spirituality and affluenza.

When it comes to male spirituality, men seem to have only two choices for models. "They are told to be strong and take charge like warriors or to be silent and alone like meditating monks," says Gareth Brandt, author of the new Herald Press book *Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality*. "Being aggressive or passive seem to be the only options out there."

For Brandt, who teaches spirituality at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, British Columbia, those images—made popular by some Christian men's movements—are too limiting. "When I started examining the subject, I thought there must be other images we could use to help us define what a Christian man looks like," he says.

He decided to test his idea by inviting some male friends to participate in a discussion group exploring different images of male spirituality. "Within 24 hours, the group was full," he says. "It showed me that I wasn't alone in feeling this way."

Brandt, a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, sent each chapter out to the group, which then met to talk about it. The result of those meetings is *Under Construction*, which uses the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis to explore other images of male spirituality.

Brandt selected stories about Joseph for the book because "he was an ordinary man who experienced a lot in life—tragedy, shattered dreams, temptations and fulfillment in life and work," he says. "Yet he was strong and gentle, showed a love for God and was able to forgive and be reconciled with those who had harmed him."

The desire to be a peacebuilder and to promote God's shalom in the world are key elements of male spirituality for Brandt.

"Male spirituality reaches its height when it shows compassion to all people, beginning with those close to us," he says. "It's about being part of building God's commonwealth of love and justice, having the courage to face the wounds of our past and building a marriage, a family and a career while empowering others to build with us."

Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality was made possible through the generous support of Mennonite Men, an organization of Mennonite Church USA and Canada that promotes and develops resources for men.

Affluenza interrupted

Last year, many North Americans worried about getting H1N1 influenza. Fewer worried about catching a different kind of virus—affluenza. That worries Hugo and Doreen Neufeld, Canadian authors of *Affluenza Interrupted: Stories of Hope from the Suburbs*, a new book available through Mennonite Publishing Network.

Hugo describes the illness as "a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more."

The authors use stories and first-person accounts to reflect on the challenges of living as Christians in the suburbs. "We haven't solved this thing for ourselves," says Doreen. "We're not trying to make people feel guilty. We just want to share some of our experiences and thoughts with others who might be struggling with affluence."

Both books are available from www.mpn.org.—*John Longhurst of Mennonite Publishing Network*

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Mennonite army major a misnomer

Major Mark Nordstrom is a Missionary church member, not a pacifist

Major Mark Nordstrom told a reporter that he shows love for his neighbor by putting himself in harm's way.

The reporter's news story carried the headline "Mennonite Chaplain Charts His Own Path." It is found on Military.com and was published in *Stars and Stripes* in 2007.

"I'm not a pacifist in the way most Mennonites are," Nordstrom was quoted. Nordstrom is a part of the Missionary Church.

The *Stars and Stripes* reporter also interviewed Michael Sharp, a counselor at Military Counseling Network in Germany at the time and now a student in Germany.

"Personally and from my experience, I'm surprised that someone would call [himself] a Mennonite if he is not pacifist because that's one of the main things Mennonites are known for," Sharp said in a phone interview with *The Mennonite* on Jan. 12. "Obviously some issues are much more important to us than others."

Former Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary president Nelson Kraybill also investigated this story. He contacted Tom Murphy, the Missionary Church leader quoted in the *Stars and Stripes* article.

"Murphy agreed that Chaplain Nordstrom is not a Mennonite and should not have been presented as such," wrote Kraybill on Jan. 12.

Sharp said he wants Mennonites to stand as witnesses. "I want people who hear about Mennonites automatically to know they do not go to war," he said.

However, Sharp said the article does not offend him or worry him. "The article is going out to the military community. It is a feel-good story where a chaplain gets to talk about how good Christians get to go to war."

In fact, Sharp said he worries about attitudes within Mennonite Church USA.

Sharp said he feels more concerned about Mennonites supporting war and the growing number of Mennonites who show openness to entering military service.

According to Conrad Kanagy's Church Member Profile, 21 percent of members would enter military service if faced with a draft, compared with 11 percent in 1972.

"I'm glad this [article on Nordstrom] is raising eyebrows in the United States," Sharp said.

Sharp said he would like to get together and talk with Nordstrom if the opportunity arises.—*Anna Groff*

RESOURCES

War, Peace and Social Conscience: Guy F. Hershberger and Mennonite Ethics by Theron F. Schlabach (Herald Press, 2009, $39.99) shows how Hershberger helped Mennonites navigate perilous times in the early- to mid-20th century and helped lay the foundation for what became the Alternative Service Program in the United States during World War II. In the 1960s, he played an important role in guiding the Mennonite Church's response to the Civil Rights Movement.

A School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009 by John E. Sharp (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2009, $29.95) tells the story of Kansas Mennonites at the turn of the 20th century who developed a vision for educating their children.

Ask Third Way Café: 50 Common and Quirky Questions About Mennonites by Jodi Nisly Hertzler (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2009, $9.95) presents 50 questions received over the years at www.thirdway.com, a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA.

Miracle Temple: Poems by Esther Yoder Stenson (DreamSeeker Books and Herald Press, 2009, $12.95) presents poems in two distinct voices—one of Aunt Amelia as channeled by her niece Esther Stenson, the other that of Stenson herself.

Continuing the Journey: The Geography of Our Faith; ACRS Memoirs, Volume 2, edited by Nancy V. Lee (Anabaptist Center for Religion and Society and Herald Press, 2009, $23.95), includes essays from 16 Mennonite writers whose lives have had worldwide impact while linked to service at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

A President's Journey: The Memoirs of Henry Poettcker (CMU Press, 2009, $26.50) recounts his passage from a Russian Mennonite farm boy to the president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and of Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Under his leadership, both institutions experienced development and growth.

A Lasting Gift: The Journal and Selected Writings of Sandra L. Cronk, edited by Martha Paxson Grundy (Quaker Press, 2009, $19), records the life and faith of Cronk, a Quaker author, teacher and spiritual guide. A gifted storyteller, her journals reveal not only a love of God from childhood on but often a critique of herself and others with whom she shared her often difficult journey.

What's next for African-American Mennonites?

The history of African-Americans is as old as the history of our country. But it was not until 1925, when Harvard-trained Carter G. Woodson conceived and announced Negro History Week, that the importance of African-American contributions gained attention. The first celebration was held in February 1926. Fifty years later, as part of the nation's bicentennial celebrations in 1976, Negro History Week became Black History Month. President Gerald R. Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

As our nation celebrates African-American History month, it is only fitting that we celebrate the many accomplishments of African-Americans in the North American Mennonite church. Thankfully, Mennonite congregations in the United States were a bit ahead of the times in regard to race relations.

African-Americans have had an important role in the Mennonite church. As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past, what lessons can we glean, as a church, that will successfully propel us into the future?

Missional: According to *The Black Mennonite Church in North America* by LeRoy Bechler, Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission near New Holland, Pa., was the first Mennonite "church" organized for the African-American community. The Industrial Mission, started in 1898, was organized to fight the poverty and racism faced by African-American workers settling in the New Holland area. African-American parishioners were given work opportunities and were paid in provisions. The Anglo Mennonites saw a need and an opportunity to share the gospel. Most if not all the 13 original African-American Mennonite congregations began as mission projects.

Led primarily by Anglos, these missions provided resources, employment and hosted Sunday school classes for African-Americans. Programs for children were also a large part of these efforts.

In his manuscript "Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries," Tobin Miller Shearer discusses the Fresh Air Program that again primarily targeted African-American children. Not only did African-Americans become a part of the Mennonite church through houses of worship but via homes and open hearts as well.

It is clear that the early Anglo church work-

LeRoy Bechler Photograph Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen

A Mennonite Sunday school class in the Pruitt Homes neighborhood of St Louis. Pruitt Homes was on a 57-acre site. It eventually failed, and the 33-building, 2,870 apartment, Pruitt-Igoe public housing project, completed in 1954, was razed completely in 1976.

ers of the Mennonite church in North America had a missional heart. A truly missional church sees its community not as it is but as God desires it to be. Then the church draws upon the gifts and talents of its members and the community to bring that vision to fruition. Although limited by the racism and socially acceptable norms of their time, people made efforts to deliver the gospel to the African-American community "by giving them a better condition spiritually by establishing Sunday schools and church services among them," as Bechler writes.

Created for but not created by: While well-intentioned, some of these missions were created to answer the question, What shall we do with the Negro?

When this question was posed in the early 1930s to Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, they decided it was better to create a separate mission for blacks than go against the social norms and allow race mixing (this would later change with the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement).

The result was South Christian Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. Bechler lists the 13 original African-American Mennonite churches and the years they were founded:

- Welsh Mountain, Lancaster (Pa.) County, 1898
- South Christian Street Mennonite Church (now Crossroads), Lancaster, Pa., 1933
- Diamond Street Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, 1935
- Broad Street Mennonite Mission, Harrisonburg Va., 1935
- Andrews Bridge, Christiana, Pa., 1938
- Buttonwood Mennonite Fellowship, Reading, Pa., 1938
- Thirty-Fifth Street Mennonite Mission, Los Angeles, 1940
- Bethel Mennonite Church, Chicago, 1944
- Dearborn Street Mission, Chicago, 1945
- Rockview Mennonite Church, Youngstown, Ohio, 1947
- Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, 1948
- Rehoboth Mennonite Church, St. Anne, Ill., 1949
- Ninth Street Mennonite Church, Saginaw, Mich., 1949

Some of these congregations are no longer in existence; some are not now members of Mennonite Church USA. Over time, some of these early missions collapsed. Some succeeded, but the seeds of integration had been planted.

Still it would take some time before African-American leaders came into their own.

While the first mission was launched in 1898, it was not until 1945, with the ordination of James Lark, that African-American Mennonites became recognized as true leaders in the church. James Lark eventually was appointed bishop in 1954.

Shearer writes that during the civil rights era, African-American women such as Rowena Lark and Nettie Taylor commanded authority during interracial gatherings. Over the next 30 years, black pastoral leadership steadily increased in the church. According to Shearer, in the 1980s, over half the black and integrated congregations were led by black pastors. In spite of growing African-American leadership, many of the African-American churches were still financially dependent on the Anglo church. The African-American Mennonite church responded with the creation of the Black Caucus of the Mennonite Church (MC) in 1982. In 1986, Leslie Francisco III, pastor of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., became the second black bishop in the history of the Mennonites in North America and eventually the president of the African-American Mennonite Association, successor to the Black Caucus of the Mennonite Church. AAMA and its predecessor were created to give voice to the African-American constituency of the Mennonite Church and provide training and support to the dispersed African-American congregations within Mennonite Church USA.

What's next? What became of the Welsh Mountain Mission? According to Richard Buckwalter, a bishop in Lancaster Mennonite Conference, the Welsh Mountain Mennonite Church held its final service on May 15, 2005. Welsh Mountain experienced dramatic change in recent decades. The poor, rural African-American community migrated to the nearby small cities and towns for greater economic opportunity while simultaneously the upper-middle-class Anglos from the nearby communities discovered the natural beauty of the Welsh Mountain area, purchased the real estate and gradually replaced the substandard housing with luxurious new homes. The new residents of this community were not attracted to a small Mennonite church on the Welsh Mountain (see map on page 48). The ministry of the Welsh Mountain Home, a

Photo provided

Bishop Leslie Francisco III is currently president of the African-American Mennonite Association

LeRoy Bechler Photograph Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen

James and Rowena Lark barbecue ribs in 1949 with voluntary service workers Mary Alice Shaum and Alta Byler at Camp Rehoboth. The Larks purchased 10 acres of land near Hopkins Park, Ill., for a camp earlier that year. The first Sunday school began Nov. 13 and later became Rehoboth Mennonite Church.

residence for elderly folks with limited financial resources, continues at this location. Mountain Spring Mennonite Church has begun meeting in the chapel at this location. This congregation is largely traditional Mennonite families who include ministry to the residents of the Welsh Mountain Home as a part of their mission.

Today there are many African-American and integrated congregations in Mennonite Church USA. Many of these congregations have gifted African-American leaders. Many of the churches are strong spiritually, financially and in membership. These African-American and integrated congregations are planting churches, involved in their communities and growing leaders.

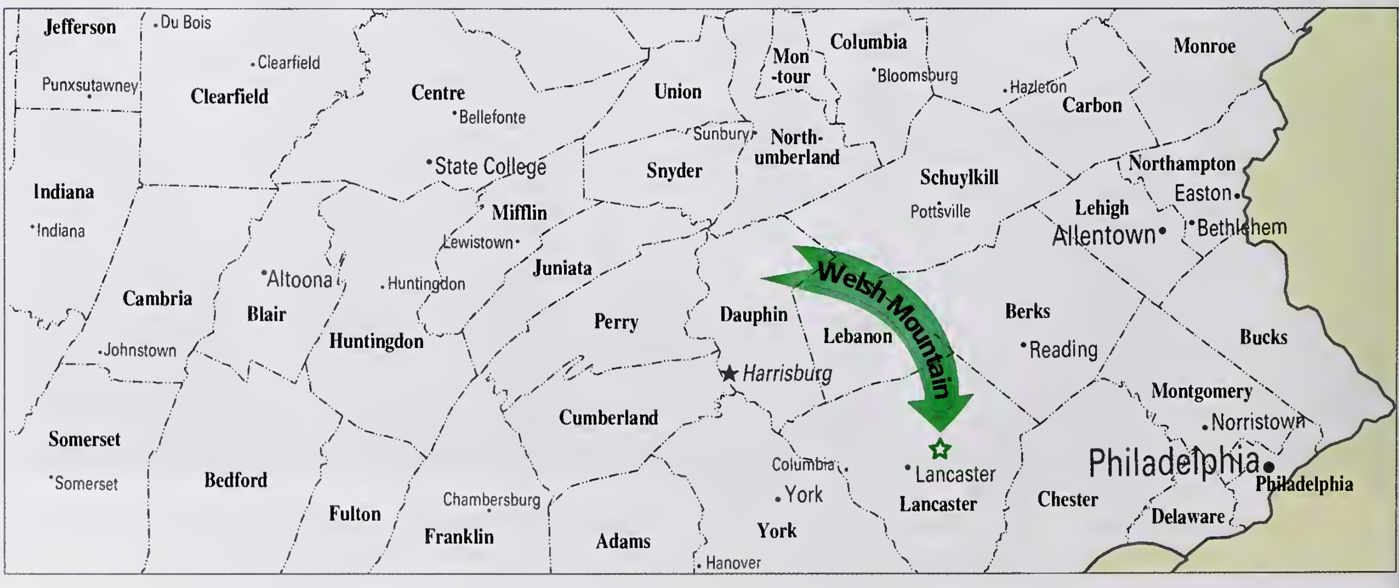
As an African-American, I am thankful for the early church pioneers, from the first African-American leaders to the Anglo brothers and sisters of Lancaster Conference who were some of the first in the Mennonite Church to welcome African-American congregants.

But what is next for African-American Mennonites? Race relations in the United States have changed dramatically since the 1800s. The country has an African-American president, and our church has many strong African-American leaders, from congregations to conferences to Executive Leadership. It is now their burden to ensure that African-Americans remain an integral part Mennonite Church USA, that the success of the past is not allowed to stagnate.

How does the church continue to be missional and move forward in its ministry to all people? Like the Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission, the ebb and flow of time and circumstance can change our focus. Our institutions can become "unattractive" and irrelevant if our vision and mission are not clear.

Even though race relations have changed dramatically, race is still an issue in our country and our church. To remain relevant to all God's people—whether, African-American, Anglo, Asian, Native or Swiss-German—we must seek to understand our changing community and the people who are a part of it.

Shearer reports that in a conversation with a white Mennonite leader in 1959, Martin Luther King Jr. asked, "Where have you Mennonites been?" Today I want to ask, Where are we Mennonites going?—*Glen Alexander Guyton, Mennonite Church USA minister for intercultural relations, Executive Leadership*



Chinese church grows tenfold after earthquake

Government recognizes church work, decides to rebuild church in town square.

When the May 2008 earthquake largely destroyed the church in Mianzhu, China, church members were among the first to help their neighbors.

This outward focus, backed by financial aid from Mennonites, has had specific results. For one, the Mianzhu church has grown tenfold in less than two years since the quake.

Millions of aid dollars rolled into China following the earthquake in Sichuan province. Some of that was from Mennonite donors and agencies. But most of the recipients of Mennonite aid will never know it. Mennonite aid served to buy local supplies, distributed by local churches, volunteers and agencies. Chinese leaders believe the aid and the growth are connected.

Peter Yuan, a Chinese pastor in Chengdu and a graduate of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., helped coordinate tents and tarps as temporary shelters in Mianzhu. Supplies arrived, purchased from local and national sources with donations from Mennonite Mission Network, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Church Canada Witness, through Mennonite Partners in China (MPC, a Mennonite Mission Network partner). Yuan worked with the Mianzhu church's pastor and members to distribute donations from the church building. Besides food and shelter, members also offered medicine and health care for the injured.

The local government recognized the work done by the church and its growing importance in the community by making the church building part of the rebuilt central town square. The cooperation among church members and the government has been vital, Yuan says.

James and Michelle Stabler-Havener serve in Chengdu, China, through Mennonite Mission Network and MPC. James Stabler-Havener says it was not the Westerners' place to lead or direct the relief effort.

"If help from the church is always accompanied by a white face, or even primarily accompanied by a white face, it reinforces the notion that Christianity is a foreign faith, led by foreigners," says Stabler-Havener. "In a time of crisis, when the [Mianzhu] church itself was largely destroyed, they still continued to focus on serving others instead of helping themselves. This was a powerful witness to a different way of life."

Some international groups that tried to control the process, he says, ran into obstacles at local levels that stopped aid distribution, in part because disaster area access was controlled to prevent so-called disaster tourism. North American Mennonites, who served as friends and partners acting to localize aid, found no such barriers

"The people who live in the disaster area wanted to do something themselves, not just have others show up and help them," Stabler-Havener says.

After listening to those living in quake-affected areas, MPC representatives and partners found local supplies and used networks of area residents to serve and distribute in the midst of their distress. While many aid organizations sent items on their standard lists, Stabler-Havener says, the Mennonites sent what was requested, including baby formula, milk and feminine hygiene products, which Stabler-Havener says made it on few other distribution lists.

Stabler-Havener says long-term relationships among North American and Chinese leaders helped partners better organize the distribution through local channels.

In addition to the numerical growth and the plans for the town's reconstruction, church leaders have been offered suburban land from the government for an additional building.

Also, a Chinese donor now living overseas has pledged money to rebuild the old church building.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Korean Anabaptists meet in California

Form new group for support in a culture dominated by Reformed theology

From the seeds of shared stories, the Korean Anabaptist Fellowship was born. Korean Anabaptist pastors and leaders met together Nov. 19-21, 2009, in Upland, Calif., to share stories and ideas from their ministry.

"The most valuable part of this gathering was having the opportunity to meet and to hear the story of each Korean leader who confesses [he or she is] Anabaptist. It is interesting to hear how they try to live out the Anabaptist confession in a Korean context," says Hyung-Jin Kim, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.

The idea for this gathering was developed by Hyun Hur, pastor of Church for Others in Temple City, Calif. Hur wanted to provide a space where congregational leaders who identify as Anabaptists could come together to fellowship and build supportive relationships.

Korean Anabaptist leaders often feel like they are working alone or among Anabaptist communities that don't understand Korean culture and background.

"This meeting was important in order to contextualize Anabaptist faith and practice in Korean Christianity, which is so strongly oriented to Reformed theology and tradition," says James Rhee, pastor of Stephens City (Va.) Korean Mennonite Church.

Leaders came from the United States, South Korea and Canada and were hosted by Mountain View Mennonite Church in Upland. This was the first official international meeting of Korean Anabaptists.

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Church USA's intercultural relations team and Mennonite Church Canada Witness provided funds to help subsidize travel and meeting costs.

Kuaying Teng, Mennonite Church USA's denominational minister for Asian ministries and a Mennonite Mission Network staff member, helped Hur contact Korean leaders connected with Mennonite Mission Network.

The first day of the gathering was spent getting to know each other and watching and discussing several documentary films about North Korea. During the following days, leaders took turns telling stories and sharing Anabaptist resources that have been translated into Korean, such as congregational liturgical resources from each ministry and Palmer Becker's *Missio Dei* booklet, "What is an Anabaptist Christian?"

Leaders also discussed challenges and needs their churches and organizations are facing.

"While the number of Korean Anabaptist churches is growing," says Kyong-Jung Kim, administrator of the Korean Anabaptist Center in Seoul, "and its network is expanding, we need to have clearer communication structures because all of us come from different backgrounds with faith practices. It is most important to hold to the unity of the body of Christ."

At the end of the gathering, the group named themselves the Korean Anabaptist Fellowship and made plans to gather again with the Korea Anabaptist Fellowship in Canada (KAFC) at the June 29–July 3 Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Calgary, Alberta.

The KAFC has met annually in conjunction with the Mennonite Church Canada assembly since 2007. The combined group plans to gather annually and to stay in touch throughout the year via email.

"Together we celebrated the birth of people who seek to follow Jesus in the Anabaptist way of faith and practice and also in the Korean context," says Kim. "We promised to hold each other in solidarity."—*Hannah Heinzekehr for Mennonite Mission Network*

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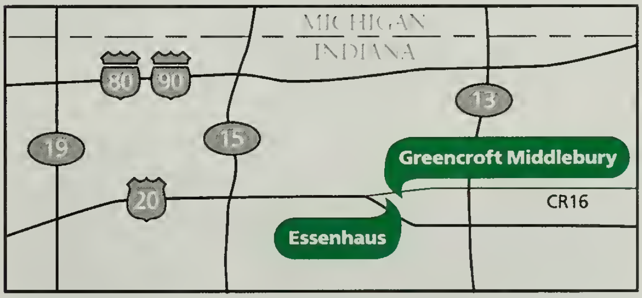

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Climate change affects farmers in Kenya

Farmers used to expect 25 bags of maize from two acres; now it's only five bags.

Changes in climate patterns in Kenya make it impossible for small-scale farmers to continue growing primary food crops such as maize and beans.

About 50 years ago, farmers could expect to produce 25 bags of maize from one hectare (almost 2.5 acres), each bag weighing about 198 pounds, says Joshua Mukusya, a farmer whose family has been tilling the ground for generations. He lives in Kola, a community in the semiarid Machakos District in eastern Kenya.

"Now, you will be very lucky if you get five bags per hectare," he says.

Mukusya says farmers in Kenya see global climate change as the major factor contributing to rising temperatures, delayed and unreliable rainfall, soil erosion and droughts that are becoming more frequent, more severe and less predictable.

"The climate is changing—it is very clear," says Mukusya, a leader of the Utooni Self-Help Group, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partner organization. Utooni Self-Help Group helps rural families improve food and water security by terracing land, building sand dams and planting trees.

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The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change met in Copenhagen in December 2009 to come up with a global strategy to address climate change after 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol expires.

Mukusya says he was hopeful that discussions at the Copenhagen conference would lead to bold and meaningful measures that would increase international support to help the country improve food production, restore water tables and redevelop pastures and wildlife habitat.

"The majority of people here have no resources to cope with the situation," he says. "If we don't make changes, we cannot survive."

With assistance from MCC and other nongovernmental organizations, Utooni Self Help Group is helping rural families rediscover skills to grow, cook and store indigenous crops such as millet, sorghum, cowpeas, cassava and sweet potatoes.

"Maize and beans used to grow well in our climate, but we are now going back to the old crops that can withstand the drought," he says.

Rural families are also improving agricultural productivity and sustainability through building sand dams, reducing soil erosion, planting trees and other soil and water conservation projects.

"People are interested in making changes—everybody recognizes there is a need for change, but the demand is bigger than we can reach," says Mukusya.

Bruce Guenther, who works with MCC's food and disaster program, says people most at risk of increased drought and other extreme events, such as floods, hurricanes and cyclones, are those who are already experiencing poverty, live in vulnerable settings and have limited access to resources to help them cope with increased disasters.

"For me, it is an equity issue," says Guenther. "Those who are the least responsible for the crisis are most affected. How can we ignore it?"

Solutions are within reach, but there needs to be political will to accept responsibility and accountability for actions that create hunger and hardships for people "who are already in precarious situations," he says.

"These things are preventable—we need to show through our actions that as a Christian community we understand accountability," says Guenther.

Mukusya is hoping that countries will act on the strategies that are developed.

"For us, this is a matter of survival," Mukusya says. "God created abundant land. We need to find solutions to the destruction we have made for ourselves."—*Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee*

CALENDAR

Philadelphia area Damascus Road Antiracism Analysis Training, Feb. 26-28, in Norristown, Pa. Study a biblical basis and an analytic framework for dismantling systemic racism in the church and church-related organizations and ministries. Online registration, English and Spanish brochures are available at www.slf.franconiaconference.org. For information contact Sharon Williams, 610-277-1729, sharonw@cavtel.net

WORKERS

Brubaker, Verle, resigned as pastor at Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover, Md., effective Jan. 3.

Davila, Edelmira, was ordained as associate pastor at La Luz Del Mundo Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., on Nov. 22, 2009.

Glick, Karl, retired as pastor at Ark Bible Chapel, Boyertown, Pa., effective Jan. 1.

Gonzalez, Freddie O., was ordained as lead pastor at Iglesia Evangelica Menonita, Vineland, N.J., on Dec. 6, 2009.

Harder, Ruth R., was ordained as associate pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., on Sept. 27, 2009.

Harnish, David L., began a term as lead pastor at Marietta Community Chapel, Marietta, Pa., on Nov. 8, 2009.

Hedrick, Michael, was licensed for specific ministry as a chaplain at Lehigh Valley Health Network on July 12, 2009, at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa.

Hodge, Mark, was licensed as Minister of Youth and Evangelism at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va., on Jan. 3.

Koch, Ryan, was licensed as pastor at Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, Texas, on Dec. 11, 2009.

Kuniholm, Jason H., was installed as bishop/overseer at Lititz and Mellinger Districts, Lancaster, Pa., on Nov. 15, 2009.

Mentzer, Mark W., began a term as associate pastor for youth and young adults at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand. Pa., on Nov. 15, 2009.

Nguyen, Peter H., was licensed as associate pastor at Vietnamese Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa., on Nov. 22, 2009.

Nussbaum, Elena, was licensed as youth pastor at Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, Kan., on Dec. 11, 2009.

Oberholtzer, Leon H., began a term as associate minister of congregational life at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Dec. 1, 2009.

Pelkey-Landes, Craig, resigned as pastor at Oley Valley Mennonite Church, Oley, Pa., effective Jan. 1.

Perez, Julio, was ordained as lead pastor at La Luz del Mundo Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., on Nov. 22, 2009.

Pham, Tha, was licensed as evangelist at Vietnamese Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa., on Nov. 22, 2009.

Yoder Harms, Dawn, resigned as co-pastor at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa., effective Jan. 1.

Shenk, Harold and Mary Grace, ended their assignment as interim co-pastors at West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., effective Jan. 3.

OBITUARIES

Alderfer, Earle Landes, 93, Sarasota, Fla., died Jan. 2 of complications from pneumonia. Spouse: Mary Ellen Shisler Alderfer. Parents: Melvin and Lizzie Etta Landis Alderfer. Children: John, Herbert, Joseph, Linda Ruiz; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Alger, Retha Romaine Mishler, 92, Broadway, Va., died Dec. 21, 2009. Spouse: John P. Alger. Parents: Oscar and Emma Miller Mishler. Children: Victor, Wanda L. Alger Waples; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway.

Bennett, H. Ernest, 94, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 17, 2009. Spouse: Earla Hostetter Bennett (deceased). Parents: Frank and Theoda Collins Bennett. Children: Ernest Dale, Kathy Stiffney, Joan Yoder; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Bishop, Ann Dayton, 88, Sellersville, Pa., died Dec. 20, 2009. Spouse: J. Vernon Bishop (deceased). Parents: Robert and Rhoda Dayton. Children: James, Robert, Rebecca Swartzendruber, J. Eric, Michael; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; two step-great grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite. org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Ebersole, Everett Roy, 92, Sterling, Ill., died Dec. 9, 2009. Spouse: Dorothy Alvera Book Ebersole (deceased). Parents: Roy and Ruth Nice Ebersole. Children: Nancy Ebersole, Marcia Jackson, Janice Calsyn, Verne, Sharon Graybill; 17 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling.

Eymann, Edythe Klassen, 87, Reedley, Calif., died Oct. 4, 2009. Spouse: Ralph E. Eymann. Parents: Henry and Katie "Tina" Kroeker Klassen. Children: Judy Taylor, Laurie Olvera, Steven, Ralph, Jr.; 11 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Sierra View Homes, Reedley.

Fliginger, Floyd, 86, Freeman, S.D., died Dec. 20, 2009. Spouse: Alice K. Haar Urbina Fliginger. Spouse: Alice Lorriene Pankratz Fliginger (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Lydia Gering Fliginger. Children: Shana Fliginger, Trent; one grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Friesen, Ella M. Toews, 88, Inman, Kan., died Dec. 20, 2009. Spouse: Willie D. "Bill" Friesen (deceased). Parents: Frank H. and Anna Marie Ediger Toews. Children: Charles T., Jonas T., Otis T., Ben T.; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 23 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Frey, Vernon, 97, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 11, 2009. Spouse: Marie Crossgrove Frey (deceased). Parents: Ezra A. and Cora E. Miller Frey. Children: Elaine Frey, Donald, Duane, Diane Bodiker, Joyce Troyer; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Gingerich, Rosalee E. Schrock, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 8, 2009. Spouse: Eli L. Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Daniel Ora and Eldora Byler Schrock. Children: LuAnn Stampfler, Eric, Kevin, Steven; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Goossen, Henry W., 93, North Newton, Kan., died Dec. 26, 2009. Spouse: Edna Marie Ensz Goossen. Parents: Andrew and Helen Penner Goossen. Children: Sharon Bartel, LaVonne Sawatzky, Duane; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Guhr, Marie J. Bartel, 95, North Newton, Kan., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Henry Guhr (deceased). Parents: John and Maria Jantz Bartel. Children: Leon, Royce, Wanda Justesen, Rita Rogers; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 9 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Haarer, Anna Slabaugh, 79, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 8, 2009. Spouse: David M. Haarer. Parents: Moses and Anna Slabaugh. Children: Carlton, Eric, Brian; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 13 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hartzler, Anna Mae Wenger Miller, 91, Wellman, Iowa, died Dec. 12, 2009. Spouse: Ronald E. Hartzler. Spouse: Orie Wenger (deceased). Parents: Harvey J. and Elizabeth Yoder Miller. Children: Clayton Wenger, Galen Hartzler, Donald Hartzler; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Hochstetler, Chris U., 78, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 4, 2009. Spouse: Edna Mae Troyer Hochstetler. Parents: Urias and Anna Miller Hochstetler. Children: Devon, Karen Yoder; five grandchildren; one step-grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Kauffmann, Melvin L., 91, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 12, 2009. Spouse: Marietta Barth Kauffmann. Parents: Aaron and Magdaline Birky Kauffmann. Children: Duane, Galen, Donald, Keith, Curtis; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at The Meetinghouse, Greencroft Retirement Communities, Goshen.

Knechel, Esther R. Landis, 84, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 17, 2009. Spouse: Jerry A. Knechel (deceased). Parents: Warren and Clara Rickert Landis. Children: Lois A. Ehst, Nancy Kolb, Jerry A., Larry, Brent; 13 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at Towamencin Mennonite Church, Kulpsville, Pa.

Krabill, Dr. Richard, 71, Madison, Ohio, died Dec. 23, 2009, of cancer. Parents: Rollin and Gladys Johns Krabill. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Kreider, Gerald Richard, 89, Newton, Kan., died Dec. 27, 2009. Spouse: Alice Lucille Hostetler Loewen Kreider. Spouse: Elinor M. Krehbiel Kreider (deceased). Parents: Amos and Stella Shoemaker Kreider. Children: Carl, Jean Reichenbach, Richard, Ellen Kreider, James, Kathryn Kreider; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Kreider, J. Robert, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 30, 2009. Spouse: Virginia Stalter Kreider. Parents: Lloyd S. and Adelia Stover Kreider. Children: J. Evan, Paul, Mark, Bruce, Franklin; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Lehman, Dorothy M. Eshleman, 92, Paradise Township, Pa., died Dec. 1, 2009. Spouse: J. Clair Lehman (deceased). Parents: Clarence B. and Anna B. Rohrer Eshleman. Children: Lola Mareta Lehman, C. Ronald, J. Marlin. Funeral: Dec. 4 at West Bethany Chapel, Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa.

Mann, Mildred F. Kiefer, 95, Elkhart, Ind., died Nov. 22, 2009. Spouse: Harvey Mann (deceased). Parents: Leonard and Bertha Holderbaum Kiefer. Children: Thelma Bixler, Jeannine I. Mann, Marcia E. Troup, Elenor J. Newton; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 25 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Martin, Willard "Dick," 89, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 11, 2009. Spouse: Melba Weaver Martin. Parents: Seranus S. and Blendina Gingrich Martin. Funeral: Dec. 16 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Cletus, 94, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 1, 2009. Spouse: Ella Short Miller (deceased). Funeral: Dec. 5 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Miller, Mary May Yoder, 89, Asheville, N.C., died Dec. 2, 2009. Spouse: Roy Miller (deceased). Parents: Trennis and Mary Schwartz Yoder. Children: Janet Boyd, Jim; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Asheville Mennonite Church.

Mullett, Esther E. Miller, 90, Nappanee, Ind., died Dec. 18, 2009. Spouse: Henry "Hank" J. Mullett (deceased). Parents: Samuel J. and Sarah Yoder Miller. Children: Paul, Kenneth, Eugene, Mark; eight grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee.

Myers, Myrtle Irene Miller, 79, Chambersburg, Pa., died Dec. 28, 2009. Spouse: Clarence H. Myers. Parents: Howard L. and Elizabeth K. Miller. Children: Linda J. Crawford, Claudia R. Place, Lori M. Colonna; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Deep Run Mennonite Church West, Deep Run, Pa.

Overholser, Gladys M. Hufford, 97, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 14, 2009. Spouse: Claude A. Overholser (deceased). Parents: John and Frances Hufford. Children: Sharon Miller, Donita Blosser, Melba Nunemaker; 10 grandchildren; one foster grandchild; 27 great-grandchildren; three foster great-grandchildren; two step-great-grand-children. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Plank, Lydia Caroline, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 22, 2009. Parents: Marion L. and Mary Ella King Plank. Funeral: Nov. 6 at Detwiler Auditorium, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Regier, Luella Wanetta Schmidt, 89, Turpin, Okla., died Dec. 13, 2009, at Liberal, Kan. Spouse: Arnold Regier. Spouse: John E. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Ely and Mary Redger Schmidt. Children: Donna Evans, Mary Ann Morris, Jim Schmidt, Ted Schmidt, Lonnie Regier, Marlin Regier; 16 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Turpin Mennonite Church.

Schantz, Kathryn C. Berry, 94, Swanton, Ohio, died Dec. 7, 2009. Spouse: Oliver Schantz (deceased). Parents: Ira and Ada Culp Berry. Children: Oliver, Jr., Arlene Memmer, Marjorie Stanley; 12 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Shank, Anna B. Bricker, 86, Chambersburg, Pa., died Nov. 23, 2009, of respiratory failure due to lymphoma. Spouse: Bishop Harvey E. Shank (deceased). Parents: Samuel L. and Anna Wadel Bricker. Step-children: Leah Horst, Esther Lehman, Miriam Nolt, Lois Lehman, Eunice Bollinger, James, Luke; 29 grandchildren; 70 great-grandchildren; 140 great-great-grandchildren; four great-great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Pond Bank Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Pa.

Shank, Paul William, 97, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 21, 2009. Spouse: Edna Catherine Martin Shank (deceased). Parents: Clinton and Edith Rutherford Shank. Children: Dottie Kauffmann, Carol Wolfer, Lowell, Philip, Stephen; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 24 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Stutzman, Erdina Mae Miller, 89, Streetsboro, Ohio, died Dec. 18, 2009. Spouse: Walter William Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Calvin and Emma Weaver Miller. Children: Gladys Chittick, Verda Troyer, Marilyn Esch Yoder, Doyle, Arlene Miller, Dorcas Stutzman, Merla Horst; 20 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at Aurora Mennonite Church, Aurora, Ohio.

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CORD | OBITUARIES

Beloved mother, grandmother and sister, **Lydia Henderson**, died December 18, 2009, at the age of 62. Having endured an 18-month battle with cancer, and with her family by her side in Enumclaw, Washington, Lydia left this life as serenely as she had lived it.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, December 23, at Greenwood Mennonite Church in Renton, Washington, where Lydia was an energetic member for the past 32 years.

Lydia was born July 10, 1947, in Anchorage to Charles and Phoebe Smith. She graduated from Washington High School in 1978. She attended college at the University of Washington, where she met and married Eugene Henderson. After graduation, they returned to Enumclaw.

Mrs. Henderson was a homemaker and spent many summers with her grandchildren in remote areas of the Alaskan wilderness.

She belonged to the Arboretum Foundation garden club and worked with various charities. Her interests included family, gardening, sewing and reading. She devoted much of her time and energy as a caregiver to family members, including her mother until she passed away at age 70.

Mrs. Henderson is survived by her sister, Virninia Coiro; brother, Carl Snow; 2 sons [illegible] their spouses, George and Eugene Snow, Jeff and Connie Snow; and 13 [illegible]dchi[illegible]en.

[illegible]als may be given to the American [illegible]ie[illegible]n her honor.

Illustration only

Swan, James Frank, 79, Turpin, Okla., died Dec. 29, 2009, at Tulsa, Okla. Spouse: Dorothy Franz Swan. Parents: Warren and Leola Frank Swan. Children: Annette Massoni, Jan Foster, Susan Swan; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Turpin Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Rosalie E. Garber, 83, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 4, 2009. Spouse: Daniel H. Stoltzfus. Parents: Lloyd Harvey and Nettie Pearl Hartzler Garber. Children: Priscilla Trinley, Jane Buller, Jean Martin, Danile Martens, Miriam DeShield, Lois Mast; 17 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Thomas, Boyd N., 87, Davidsville, Pa., died Dec. 29, 2009. Spouse: Nancy L. Kaufman Thomas. Parents: Newton and Mary Livingston Thomas. Children: Chris Lehman, Jerry, Brian; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa.

Toevs, Bertha Mae Dyck, 82, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 3 following a sudden illness. Spouse: Herman Lawrence Toevs. Parents: Abraham and Margaret Schmidt Dyck. Children: Jim, Janet Rae Toevs, Paul; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Weaver, Don G., 72, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 27, 2009. Spouse: Barbara Ann Geil Weaver. Parents: Albert H. and Ruth Grove Weaver. Children: Jolene Romanyshyn, Shari Weaver, Pamela Bone, Colette Simmons; three grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Weaver, Ralph L., 84, Lyndhurst, Va., died Dec. 10, 2009. Spouse: Beverly Campbell Weaver. Parents: Jason H., Sr. and Marie Martin Weaver. Children: Darrell, Janna Zirkle; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Yoder, Audrey C. Gindlesperger, 68, Davidsville, Pa., died Dec. 11, 2009, of complication from cancer. Spouse: Carlton D. Yoder. Parents: H. Merle and Virginia P. Blough Gindlesperger. Children: Willean K. Yoder, Dale L., Jean Ann Thomas, Christiane L. Blough; four grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa.

Yoder, Cordell Swartzendruber, 91, Kalona, Iowa, died Nov. 5, 2009. Spouse: Rolland M. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Mahlon and Barbara Hershberger Swartzendruber. Children: Donald G., Doug, Linford, Ronald; 13 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Yutzy, Frances Gerig, 92, Iowa City, Iowa, died Dec. 8, 2009. Spouse: Roma Yutzy (deceased). Parents: Martin and Emma Nofziger Gerig. Children: Mary Dachtler, Dorothy Yutzy, Bertha DeHerrera, Linda Stodulski, Lois Bava, Nicholas Yutzy, Charity Schlabaugh; 18 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Zimmerman, Beulah Richer, 99, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 9, 2009. Spouse: Arlen Zimmerman (deceased). Parents: David and Ida Richer. Step-children: Carolyn Metzler, Marilyn Huffman, Emogene Buerge, Roger; 10 step-grandchildren; 17 great-step-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Fairlawn Haven Chapel, Archbold.

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Trinity Mennonite Church is located in the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains between Calgary and Okotoks, Alberta. We are a growing congregation with an active membership of about 100, with diverse ages, occupations and cultural backgrounds. We are actively involved with MC Canada and MC Alberta. We seek a ***pastor*** who will provide strong leadership and focus on the vision, mission and values defined by our congregation, working together with our members and participants to foster a faith community that is open and welcoming to new participants and is founded upon the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith. Proposed start date on or about July 1, 2010. Please apply in confidence to: Rob.Doerksen@shaw.ca or Rob Doerksen, Trinity Mennonite Church, RR 1 Site 17 Box 21, DeWinton, AB T0L 0X0, Canada.

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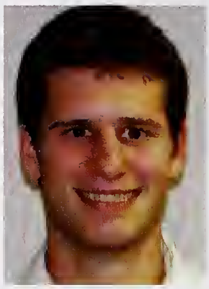
The young adult effect



Thomas Dunn associate pastor of youth and young adults at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

In his book *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell examines how we as humans make split-second decisions, many times unconsciously. Gladwell gives many real-life illustrations of the effects of our split-second decisions. One such illustration is the story of how Warren Harding came to be president of the United States.

Harding looked like the ideal leader—tall, dark and handsome. He had a presence that exuded charisma, confidence and strength. People's first impression of Harding led them to the conclusion that he was a good leader, which eventually landed him in politics. He quickly climbed the political ladder, all based on his appearance and presence, with no regard to merit. Ultimately Harding was elected president and, according to many historians, was the worst president the United States had.

The "Warren Harding Effect" is an example of how our split-second decisions can have negative results. Harding's good looks and apparent charisma were so powerful in people's first impressions that they never looked below the surface to see what abilities (or lack thereof) he actually had. In looking back over my post high school years, I think the church struggles with the Warren Harding Effect.

Young adults that have chosen to be a part of a church body are seen as a big catch.

I am not suggesting the church is guilty of selecting only tall, dark and handsome leaders. It is not appearance but age that can be so enchanting for the church—the Young Adult Effect.

It is common knowledge that many young adults are not coming back to their home churches or attending churches at all. As a result, young adults that have chosen to be a part of a church body are seen as a big catch. Young adults in the church are always the first ones to be asked to work with the youth and are frequently asked to share their perspective on committees, issues or the future of the church. I see this happening in the local congregation and the national church.

Before I go further, I want to make it clear that having young adults tapped on the shoulder for ideas and responsibilities in the church is not a bad thing. It is great that the church is making an intentional effort to hear and work with young adults. I have been overwhelmed and am appreciative of the opportunities I've been given. The church has the difficult task of being intentional about listening to and empowering young adults while at the same trying to avoid some of the dangers of the Young Adult Effect.

There are two dangers of the Young Adult Effect I want to expound on. The first is that even though it is great to be appreciated as a young adult, it can at times be a disturbing trend. Just as Harding had no business being president of the United States, I fear some young adults are being asked to do things they are ill-equipped to do.

Just because someone is under the age of 30, does that mean they are going to be a better youth pastor, youth sponsor or Sunday school teacher than a middle- or golden-aged person? No. Just because a person is under the age of 30, does it mean their cutting edge or radical opinions are any more important than a middle- or golden-aged person's opinions? No.

I repeat, it is great to give young adults responsibilities and listen to their thoughts, but please do so because they have proven to be responsible and have good things to say, not simply because they are under 30.

The second disturbing aspect of the Young Adult Effect is that when young adults are seen as a big catch, higher expectations are placed on them than on the rest of the congregation. Young adults are expected to work with the youth; young adults are expected to be the driving force behind anything new and exciting in the church. Young adults are expected to give up their time to do service or mission work. It seems that once you have a mortgage, a family and are approaching middle age the church hands out an exemption to all these opportunities and passes the torch to the younger generation. I fear God does not hand out this same exemption. The call of Christ to follow him in sacrificial ways is for all people, regardless of age. TM

Buying stuff for your avatar

Consumerism has yet another face. Now you not only can buy yourself a new sweater online, you can buy one for your avatar (and I'm not referring to James Cameron's film).

Sales of virtual goods are booming, writes Jayne O'Donnell at usatoday.com. "Even though many virtual goods cost less than $1, these micropurchases add up," she writes. "The market will reach about $1 billion this year and could grow to $1.6 billion next year, according to a report by market researcher Inside Network."

According to O'Donnell, virtual buying works like this: "You typically use a credit card or alternative payment method such as PayPal to buy credits or a special currency if the game or world has one. Then you use those credits, or 'Linden dollars' if you're shopping in the Second Life virtual world, to make purchases."

Other sites, such as Cellufun or Facebook, have their own currency or ways of making purchases or earning credits.

This growth industry is driven by the popularity of social gaming, according to Inside Network founder Justin Smith. Apparently this can be done over the lunch hour and on mobile devices.

While this is a big business and getting bigger, it was new to me when I heard about it at a coffee break at work. (Yes, we actually talk to one another occasionally, in the flesh.)

I'm borrowing from O'Donnell to describe this because I haven't participated in such social gaming. But it's worth paying attention to this phenomena because it's one more way our mediaculture is affecting us and the people around us.

I'm tempted to belittle this as adults playing with dolls (avatars), but many would judge some of my habits silly or of no good use, I imagine, so I'll forgo that criticism.

Instead it raises questions we should perhaps be discussing. For example, what moves people to do this? Not just buying clothes or jewelry for one's avatar but social gaming.

That's easy. We're all drawn to games or play, even the most workaholic among us. This is just a different venue from the dining room table or the basketball court or wherever you play your games.

And the social part makes sense. We are social creatures and need company, even the most introverted among us.

But virtual socializing? Is that because the flesh-and-blood kind is not available or as safe? Or is it just the millieu that many (mostly younger) people are familiar with?

Is this one more indictment of the church's failure to reach out to people who are lonely? Maybe. But I suspect that many of those taking part in social gaming are also in our churches.

What about the "new face of consumerism," as I labeled it? I'm hesitant to criticize this without criticizing other consumerism. In fact, this may be preferred, from a strictly utilitarian point of view. After all, spending $10 for an outfit for your avatar may be better than spending $200 for an outfit for yourself.

But is it better than buying a gift for your friend or spouse? After all, can an avatar love you back?

O'Donnell mentions a woman who got hooked on Cellufun two years ago when she was bored. We're called to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Are we called to minister to the bored? Maybe so. At least, perhaps, we should try to understand them. TM

Gordon Houser, associate editor of The Mennonite

BEST FILMS OF 2009

1. The Hurt Locker
2. Up in the Air
3. Up
4. Summer Hours
5. Precious
6. Food, Inc.
7. Gomorrah
8. An Education
9. Goodbye, Solo
10. Sin Nombre
—*Gordon Houser*

1. Sin Nombre
2. Precious
3. Up in the Air
4. Fantastic Mr. Fox
5. Up
—*Anna Groff*

BEST BOOKS OF 2009

Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction by Rowan Williams
Lark and Termite: A Novel by Jayne Anne Phillips
Let the Great World Spin: A Novel by Collum McCann
The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See by Richard Rohr
Too Much Happiness: Stories by Alice Munro—*gh*

FILM REVIEWS

Up in the Air (R) uses humor, excellent acting and an intelligent screenplay to show a man whose job is to fly around the country firing people. Then his company tries to ground him, his self-centered philosophy encounters pangs for human connection, and his empty life is not so happy. But this fine film is not moralistic. It uses a relevant topic—unemployment—as the backdrop to address such basic issues as what makes living bearable and worthwhile.—*gh*

Avatar (PG-13) is beautiful, stunning in its cinematography. But its story is lame, preaching the unity of all things, then playing out a typical revenge fantasy.—*gh*

Thinking clearly about abortion, again

Darrin W. Snyder Belousek serves with Mennonite Mission Network as co-leader (with Paula, his wife) of the Service Adventure unit in Raleigh, N.C.

Debra Sapp-Yarwood ("Thoughts on Abortion," June 2, 2009) wants us to be "uncomfortable" with the question of abortion, wherever one might stand on the issue. Her arguments do leave me uncomfortable, for several reasons.

First, Sapp-Yarwood shifts the terms of the debate from "pro-life" vs. "pro-choice" to "conceptionist" vs. "nonconceptionist." She is surely correct to say that the language of "pro-life" and "pro-choice" fails to represent fairly and fully the real debate. Nonetheless, this change of terms not only obscures the core issue but also draws an irrelevant distinction. Reframing the issue in this way distracts from the key question—whether an abortion, whatever the circumstance of conception or whatever the stage of pregnancy or whatever the condition of the fetus, is the killing of a human life or not.

Taking the "nonconceptionist" position, she makes the following claim: "For me, early abortions are not deaths." No? That could be true only if, prior to an abortion, there were no life in the womb. In fact, however, there cannot have been an abortion unless there had been life in the womb: no life, no abortion. Personal belief about when life begins, whether at conception or at some later time, is irrelevant. Whenever an abortion is performed, what is aborted is a human life according to biological criteria—a living organism that is genetically human, the same as both its parents. Every "successful" abortion ends a human life. To claim that "early abortions are not deaths" is to deny the objective facts of biological science.

To claim that "early abortions are not deaths" is to deny the objective facts of biological science.

Second, when comparing beginning-of-life issues with end-of-life issues, Sapp-Yarwood slides over the distinction between taking life and letting die. An abortion is the intentional destruction of a human life; it is, properly speaking, a killing: One deliberately and directly causes death. To remove a terminally ill person from a life-support system, with the result that nature takes its course and death ensues, is not killing: death is caused by the illness, as it would have been had the life-support system not been used in the first place, without any intention or action to cause death. This distinction makes a moral difference: Taking life is always forbidden; letting die is sometimes permissible.

Moreover, she employs a weak analogy when describing abortion as "the option to withdraw life support before birth." Abortion is thus compared to the removal of a mechanical life-support system. This analogy not only ignores the fact that a "successful" abortive procedure does not simply remove the fetus from the womb but actively kills it, it also compares a pregnant woman to a life-support machine. When I consider my wife, pregnant with our first child, the relationship between mother and child is not like that between machine and patient. A pregnant woman does not mechanically "support" a "patient" by means of an umbilical cord but nurtures and protects, cares for and hopes for the life in her womb. An abortion severs a vital, intimate, interhuman relationship.

Third, Sapp-Yarwood considers the "hard cases"—a woman whose child is at risk of being born with serious disabilities, a woman who has been raped or a woman in "socially complex circumstances." In the first case, the child "would by necessity be classified as 'special needs' in the adoption pool." In the second, it would be "ungodly cruel to impose mandatory pregnancy on a woman who has already endured a man raping her." In the third, abortion is "justifiable." In such cases, she is "untroubled" by abortion.

While she refers frequently to the politics and law of abortion, the church is absent from her consideration of options. Can a faith community not embrace and adopt a "special needs" child as one of its own? Has the faith community nothing better to offer a victim of violence than further violence to release her from the burden imposed upon her? Is the faith community not capable of providing the compassionate help in difficult circumstances that politics and law cannot offer?

Sapp-Yarwood appropriately reminds us that real life presents complex situations having uncertain outcomes. Complexity and uncertainty, however, need not force a choice between clarity and consistency in our convictions and compassion in our actions. Within the faith community, guided and sustained by the Holy Spirit, we may choose compassion in a way that is logically clear and ethically consistent. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Events of the New Testament

By Jeanette Baer Showalter

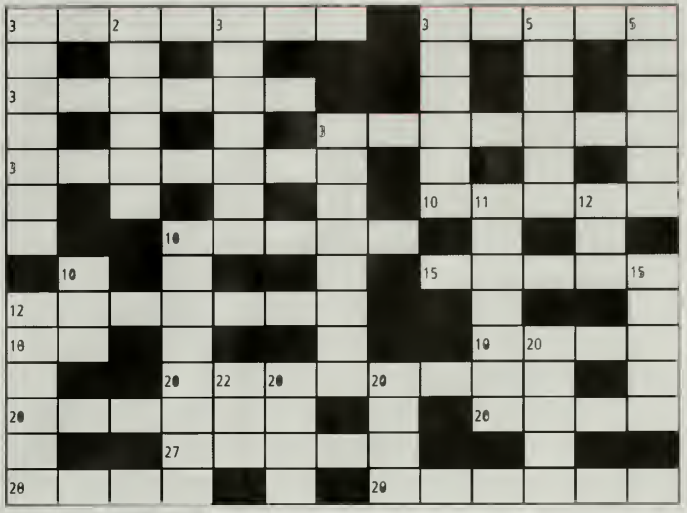
All references are to the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

ACROSS

1. A letter of correspondence.
4. His name means "the Lord is salvation."
7. A tentmaker of Corinth.
8. ______ of Pisidia or of Syria.
9. Mary asked Jesus: "Son, why have you _____ us like this?"
10. "Above all, my brothers, do not ____ —not by heaven or by earth or by anything else."
13. Bethlehem: the City of ______.
15. Interest paid on borrowed money. Luke 19:23 (KJV).
17. In Luke 16:23-28, hell is described as a place of ________.
18. "The ___ is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down." Matthew 3.
19. Monetary unit used in a parable about "putting money to work." (singular) Luke 19.
21. Fetters, chains, irons; synonym used in NRSV: "restrained with ____ and chains." Mark 5.
25. These were prepared for anointing bodies.
26. "Go into all the world and preach the good ____ to all creation."
27. "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect ____."
Colossians 3:14.
28. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called ____ of God."
29. One of the seven churches mentioned by John in Revelation; he called the church at this location a dead church.

DOWN

1. Paul's helper who went with Timothy from Ephesus to Macedonia. Acts 19
2. Greek name for Edom and origin of Herod the Great.
3. "______ koum!" Aramaic phrase Jesus used to raise the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Mark 5
4. Last name of Joseph, called Barsabus, who was considered to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts).
5. She wanted the head of John the Baptist.
6. Samaritan town where Jesus met the woman at the well. John 4.
8. This sea is mentioned in Acts 27 as the location of the storm and shipwreck during Paul's voyage to Rome (one word).
11. Magi.
12. "Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue … you will just be speaking into the ___." 1 Corinthians 14:9.
13. Location of Straight Street; Ananias was called to go there.
14. Jesus calls Herod by this animal name.
16. "He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand _____."
17. Birthplace of Paul.
20. "I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone __ ____ accepts me" (two words). John 13.
22. Jesus longs to gather the children of Jerusalem together as this animal gathers her young.
23. A "Minor" area.
24. Jesus gave to Peter "the ____ to the kingdom of heaven."



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(continued from page 5)

ating climate change and degradation of the environment that could lead to future conflicts over water and arable land?

Do the number of ads in *The Mennonite* and other church-related publications for travel opportunities suggest that this concern is not widely felt?

I look forward to discussion of these questions by "peace through tourism" promoters.—*David Alleman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Jordan no oasis of peace

I was disturbed to read the article "Jordan: An Oasis of Peace" (Dec. 1, 2009). By stating that it is "a place where peace and religious acceptance are both preached and practiced" and a place where one felt as safe as in Kansas, it sounded wonderful. If Jordan is the best model for Christian-Muslim relationships, we should all look at emigrating there.

But then the disturbing aspects start. Muslims are not allowed to convert, as Jordan is under Sharia law. Christians are not able to speak to a Muslim about faith, although Christians can convert to the Muslim faith without consequence—and, in fact, with benefits.

It felt to me that this article was biased. The article seemed to condone and accept Sharia law, which limits Christians. To say that Jordan is a tolerant and accepting society seems completely wrong.—*K. Albrecht, Toronto, Ontario*

Christmas economics

I appreciated and agree with the article by Harvey Yoder ("Christmas Economics," Dec. 15, 2009). All the money we have we have gotten from someone else: our earnings, inheritance, interest and dividends and sales. In a real sense it is not our money. We are responsible for the money that was at one time someone else's. We are stewards of God's gifts and what we have gotten from others. Have we made other people poorer while we got richer?

In a systematic, practical and biblical way, Yoder expounds on our financial and stewardship responsibilities. If we would follow the Bible and the urging of the Holy Spirit on money matters, missionaries, all our church agencies and local churches would be asking, What can we do with all this money?

If God is speaking, let us listen and obey.—*Carl Smeltzer, Harrisonburg, Va.*

A gripe

I'm really enjoying the new format of *The Mennonite* but continue to have an annoyance at the Contents page: The photographs include page numbers, but when I look over to the right side of the page, nothing relates to that.—*Molly Beiningen, Milwaukie, Ore.*

Beyond Borders:
The Role of Immigration in a Global Community

March 19-21, 2010

Hosted by Bluffton University,
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I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
Matthew 25:35

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Pathways TO MISSION AND VOCATION

Sponsored by the Bluffton University Pathways to Mission and Vocation project, with generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

First things first

I am writing at the end of my first week in my new role with Mennonite Church USA, a time of personal retreat to prepare me for the job. The search committee had told me, "The Executive Director will lead Mennonite Church USA toward a Christ-centered spirituality and missional calling."

Given this mandate, I felt a need to begin my role by listening for God's priorities and guidance. I determined to make a quiet space of several days to listen for God's voice.

Early on my first day of retreat, I sensed the Spirit saying that I should study what the Scripture has to say about priorities, as seen in the use of the word "first." I looked up the New Testament references with the word "first"—there are dozens of them—and then selected the ones that spoke most clearly to me about primacy or priority. I chose to meditate on 20-some references, drawing out spiritual principles to guide my work with the church.

I found this study to be profoundly satisfying. I commend it to anyone hoping to align their own priorities with God's main concerns. I will mention a few of the biblical references below, all cited from Today's New International Version.

As I meditated on each reference, I sensed that some stood taller than the rest. I will mention two such sayings of Christ: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the *first* and greatest commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the *First* and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Revelation 22:13).

These two passages provide the stars for navigation. They help orient me to "true north" as I negotiate my way through the complexities of church life.

I also encountered Jesus' sober counsel: "So the last will be *first*, and the *first* will be last," (Matthew 20:16). "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be *first* must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26b-28). It seems that God delights in reversing many of our top-heavy human arrangements. I take this to heart as I prepare to assume the "top" staff position in our denomination.

And then there is Jesus' sharp admonition regarding relationships with fellow believers: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. *First* go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

Addressing the all-too-common tendency to project our own faults and motives on others, Jesus offered the scathing words: "You hypocrite, *first* take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

Other biblical writers joined Jesus in speaking of priorities. The Apostle Paul often used the term "first" in his sage advice to fledgling churches. For example: "I urge, then, *first* of all, that petitions, prayers, and intercessions be made for everyone" (1 Timothy 2:1) and, "But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn *first* of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents" (1 Timothy 5:4). Paul's advice is very useful in conducting the affairs of church life today.

I jotted many insights into my journal, which will guide me as I take up my work with Mennonite Church USA.

After this week of spiritual orientation, I pray that God's priorities will guide all of us together as we seek to "follow Jesus in the world." TM

Ervin Stutzman is the executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

These two Scripture passages … orient me to "true north" as I negotiate my way through the complexities of church life.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Almost Mennonite

Everett J. Thomas

A decade ago I was startled—and then chagrined—when a well-meaning Mennonite leader from Manitoba said to me, "Thomas. That's not a Mennonite name, is it?"

I was startled because there were lots of Thomases scattered among the Mennonite congregations where I grew up. I was chagrined—OK, offended—because our clan can trace its Mennonite roots to 1747, when Adam Thomas and his family arrived in Philadelphia and settled in southern Lancaster (Pa.) County. The name Thomas has existed longer among Mennonites on this continent than have most of the states in this country.

But this incident focused a nettlesome question: Are we Mennonite by birth and family name?

Similarly, researcher Conrad Kanagy set off a small controversy among our readers when, in a Feb. 6, 2007, article we published, he used the descriptor "noncradle Mennonite"—neither parent being Mennonite. This suggested, then, that a "cradle Mennonite" is someone born to at least one Mennonite parent.

Strong as family bonds are, it is not possible to be "almost Mennonite."

Although not Kanagy's intention, linking Mennonite identity to parentage can suggest that it is a birthright. But the problem is that someone is not Anabaptist until he or she makes a public declaration of faith and is baptized as a believer. Mennonite identity also rests on membership and active participation in a Mennonite congregation.

So what does that mean for our siblings and children who are not baptized? Are they still Mennonite? What does it say about siblings and children who are baptized but turn their backs on the church? Are they still Mennonite? Two women published their thoughts about this question in our January issue.

A young adult, writing for the inaugural New Voices column, confronted those of us from white European backgrounds. She laid down a challenge to those who rely inappropriately on a "cradle Mennonite" identity. Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz did so as she reflected on her struggles with Mennonite identity as a Mexican-American.

"How do I define myself as a Mennonite whe I don't perceive that I belong?" Janet said. "Who has the authority to extend the identity of Mennonite to 'outsiders'? Is this a decision I get to make, or does someone give it to me once I've jumped through the right hoops?"

Letter-writer Joy Kauffman answered the question by reminding us of the words of Mennonite Mission Network executive director Stan ley Green (Leadership, Nov. 4, 2008).

"Some claim Mennonite identity even when they are not members of a church or make a confession of following Jesus," Green said. "Thi preoccupation with a cultural Mennonite identit flies in the face of our confession of faith not defined by allegiances of ethnicity or race."

But might the Thomas family's 263 years of Mennonite faithfulness in this country count fo something? Or what about the other half of my parentage: the myriad Miller tribes—mostly Amish—in and around Kalona, Iowa?

No. They count for nothing.

Our cover story illustrates what it means to be a Mennonite. Penelope Moon (page 12) joined a Mennonite congregation about three years ago. We count her as a Mennonite. Our siblings and children not baptized into and mem bers of this fellowship are not yet members. Strong as family bonds are, it is not really possible to be "almost Mennonite."—*ejt*

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Whispers of resurrection

MARCH 2010

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- The Word in worship
- God's realm in and among us
- The cost of medicines
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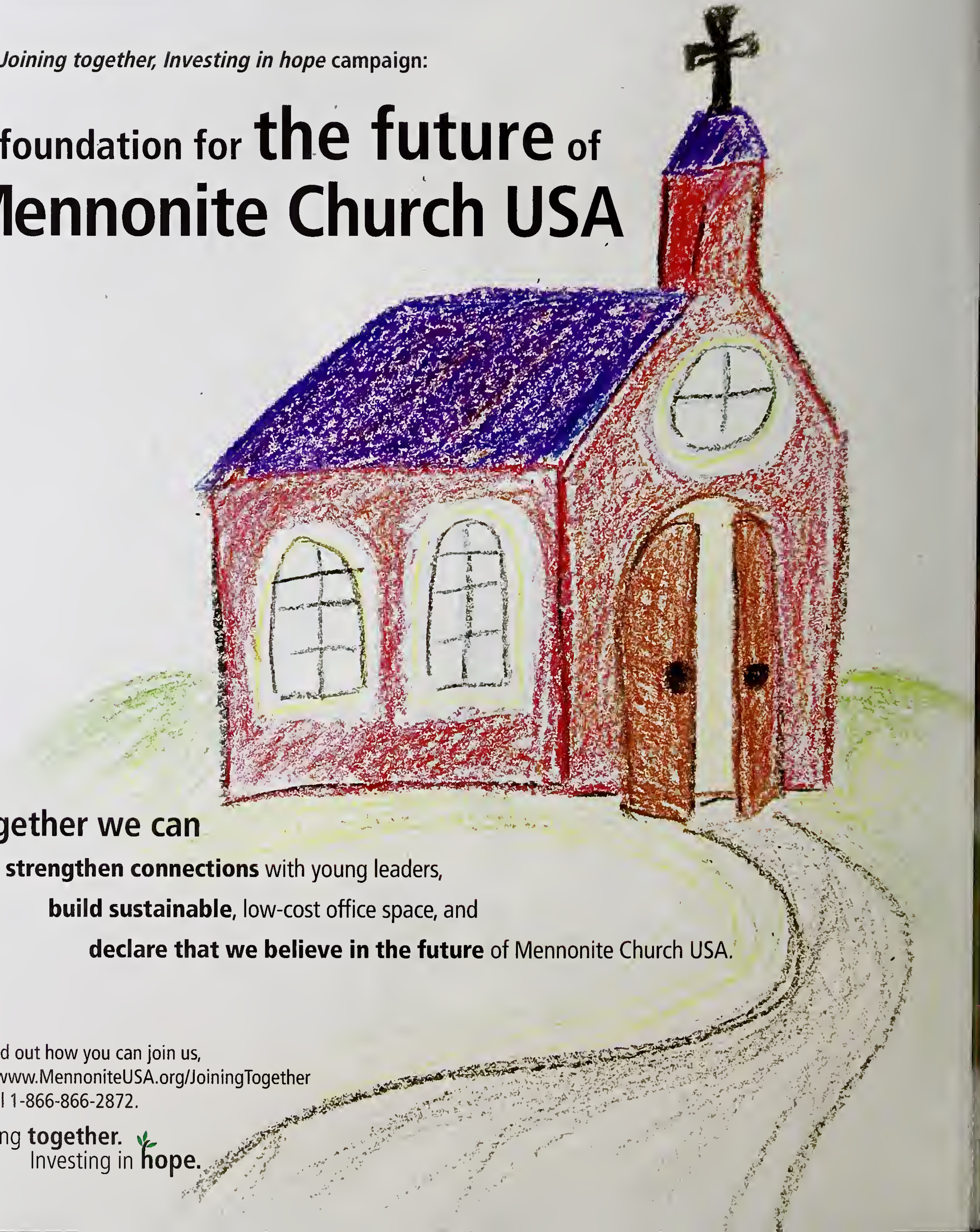

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TheMennonite March 2010 | Volume 13, Number 3

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The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Lent reorients us

We are near the beginning of Lent, the season of the church year commemorating Jesus' journey to the cross. Scripture tells us that Jesus' journey was from the beginning. Building on the Old Testament, the Gospels describe how Jesus' life began in heaven and his life on earth as an infant—as well as a refugee in Egypt. Once his ministry began, he traveled throughout Galilee, then through Judea and finally to his awaiting cross in Jerusalem. To be a Christian is to follow Jesus in this way. When Jesus invited a group to be his first disciples, it was to join him on this journey.

Annually, Lent affords us this opportunity afresh and in our own time. We journey the 40 days toward the Easter celebration, when all our hopes for salvation are realized as one people. For the Christian, salvation hope always includes both body and soul. Thus, the Lenten disciplines designed to connect us with Christ encompass the essence and totality of our existence. They are three: prayer (God-directed), fasting (self-directed), charity (other-directed).

The annual season of Lent is to help us refocus ourselves for a Lenten journey that lasts a lifetime.

This annual reorientation is especially important because we do not always know what God wants us to do next on this journey or even where God wants us to go. Such disciplines as prayer, fasting and charity serve to remind us that, while our direction is not always clear, it is nonetheless possible to know that we are moving in the right direction. That's because this journey is for us just as it was in the beginning—a gift of grace. Of course, Jesus never promised his disciples a life free of trial. But we do share in his promise to those early disciples, the promise that as long as we follow in his steps, we will never be alone. Certainly one significance of Lent is an opportunity to rediscover the promise for ourselves.—*Jonathan Emerson-Pierce, Markham, Ontario*

How could they do such a thing?

I appreciated Marilyn Miller's column "Blemished Lambs at the Altar," (January). It was concise and well-written.

Although I read the column the day *The Mennonite* came, I didn't write until today because of my pain. For I was one of those, "How could they do such a thing." Along with many other young girls, I was abused by a man in my home church in Pennsylvania. For many decades, he abused young girls and women. How could this be allowed? It took many of us brave women to stop this abuse.

Now I am in my 60s. I remember a terrible encounter when I was nine. Although spoken to several times over the years, this man was just disciplined several years ago. My pastor, here in Pigeon, Mich., Scot Wilson, and his wife, Sharon, have been a great help. Before Pastor Scot came, pastor Jay Miiller helped me start talking about my broken past.

Like Marilyn Miller says, we need to stop being quiet when treated unjustly.—*Gloria Swartzendruber, Pigeon, Mich.*

How justify special privileges?

You obviously put a lot of good work into Church Education Sunday theme section (January). My concern is that it offers almost no sense of our educational institutions having ties with

Mennonite-related schools in other parts of the world. I know this is Mennonite Church USA. But how important should we make our national boundaries when we pray for Mennonite educational efforts, and to what extent can we justify the special privileges we have in our small, insulated and privileged part of the globe?

The cost of educating one U.S. Anabaptist disciple from kindergarten to college is simply astronomical as compared with, for example, the Meserete Christos Church of approximately the same size in Ethiopia.

Encouraging our schools to develop fraternal partnerships with sister colleges and seminaries around the world might make us look bad (as we compare the kinds of facilities and budgets we assume are necessary for U.S.-based Mennonites). But maybe we should face that disparity and either make a case for it or work to change it.—*Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Ethnicity should be celebrated

Regarding Janet Trevino-Elizarrarz's column "Where Faith and Culture Intersect" (January): Janet laments about fitting into the Mennonite community without having to apologize for who she is. She wants to be a Mennonite without giving up her ethnicity, yet three paragraphs later she asks Germanic Mennonites to put aside theirs.

I am similar to Janet: a second-generation Italian Catholic "converted Mennonite Christian, passionate, purpose-driven lover of Jesus, beautiful" Italian woman.

I was drawn to the Mennonites by a Southern Baptist convert who in turn was drawn by a Chinese Mennonite. There are Mennonites all over the world who owe their beginnings to the study and insights of a Dutch Catholic priest, Menno Simons.

Despite our faith's Germanic roots, I doubt our Chinese or African Mennonite brothers and sisters would apologize for or consider setting aside their ethnicity. Despite this, they are a vibrant part of the greater Mennonite community. I say, How glorious to celebrate our differences. In celebrating our differences we glorify God. If we do this first, understanding and acceptance will follow.—*Linda Marie Snow, Austin, Texas*

Jesus did not know everything

I have been pondering the letter from Jean Martin (Dec. 1, 2009) and would like to offer another possible understanding: One of the most challenging concepts in the Christian faith for us as human beings to wrap our minds around is that of "fully divine/fully human." How could that be? What would it be like? It seems to me that Jean has accepted well the "fully divine" in Jesus but has not adequately grappled with the "fully human."

The whole wonder of the incarnation is that our God, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, was willing to limit that power at a particular time and place within a human being. God was willing to do that out of great love for us, in order that we might be able more fully to understand God's marvelous plan and what it meant to live that plan out according to God's intention on this earth.

I see in the Gospels that Jesus accepted that limitation. He did not claim to know everything. Where he was talking about the end times, he said he didn't know, and no one but God knew the time. Not knowing everything indicates an ability to learn. We are told that in his youth he "increased in wisdom and understanding." This would mean an ability to learn.

In all three Gospels in the story of the rich young ruler, Jesus asked not to be called good and said only God was good. I see in the Gospel stories of Jesus' childhood and ministry an unfolding of his understanding of the

(continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

As we prepare for Easter Sunday morning, two writers focus on Mary's experience at the tomb when she discovers the stone rolled away. In our cover story (page 12) Isaac Villegas describes what might have been the power of the resurrection for Mary and writes, "Resurrection means that Christ is now a beckoning presence, saving us from ourselves by calling us into the places that overflow with divine love."

In the Grace and Truth column (page 6), Ron Adams lifts up the power in being named, using the moment when Mary recognizes Jesus. "It was in being called by name that Mary recognized Jesus," Adams writes, "and caught a glimpse of the resurrection. When Jesus called her Mary, she was then able to call him by name."

Our feature section also includes Myron Augsburger's reflections on a "Paracosmic Millennium" (page 22) and a chapter from physician Glen Miller's book *Empowering the Patient* (page 29).

We delayed publication of this issue for a week so we could include an important news story: a report from the Executive Board's Feb. 18-20 meeting (page 43).

Our News Analysis section (pages 46-48) introduces the results of an extensive study of women in leadership.

We also have learned that Bible crossword puzzles are popular; see the list of those who submitted answers (page 60).—*Editor*

Tenderly name others

Ron Adams is a pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

The angels called her Woman. She came to the garden to mourn. But when she arrived, the stone was rolled away. The tomb was empty.

She ran to tell her friends. She told them what she'd seen, that the tomb was empty. Her friends ran to the tomb. They saw that it was empty.

After her friends had gone, she stayed in the garden. She was weeping. And not just for one loss but for two. The loss of her teacher and friend. And now this, the loss of his body, an absence she could not comprehend. Where was the body? Who had removed it? And why?

Then she looked into the tomb. She bent down and looked into the tomb. And there they were. Two angels. All dressed in white. Seated on the place where the body had been lying. One angel sat where his head had been and one at the foot. The angels spoke to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

"They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Then another voice: "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?"

She turned and saw him but did not recognize him. She thought he was the caretaker of the garden. She poured her heart out to this stranger. She asked him where the body of her friend was laid. She promised to take the body somewhere else, if only he would tell her where that body was. Where had he taken it?

Let us practice right and loving naming. She is not Poor. Her name is Judy. He is not Homeless. His name is John. She is not Disabled. Her name is Wanda. He is not Damaged. His name is Phil.

Then came the dawn.

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

And she knew him. Immediately, she knew him. And she said to him, "Teacher."

Jesus gave her a message for her friends, for his disciples. And so she ran again, back to the place where her friends were gathered. And she said to them, "I have seen the Lord."

What was it about that moment that opened her eyes? Was it something in his voice, some tenderness that Mary recognized? Or was it the sheer fact of having her name, her very own name, lovingly spoken by the Lord that made the truth known?

It seems to me that people need to be named. We want to be named. We need to be truly known. And not just in some generic way but named and known for who we really are. It seems to me the need to be named is part of what it means to be human.

But much of our political, religious and ethical speech is generic. We categorize and label. We speak of the Poor, the Homosexual, the Racial-Ethnic, the Uneducated, and the Illegal Alien. Some of that generic speech is done for the sake of convenience.

Some is done to distance ourselves from those we understand as being different. This is especially the case when talking about our enemies. By labeling them we dehumanize them and so make their marginalization or extermination easier on our collective conscience.

It is instructive to note that it was in being called by name that Mary's eyes were opened. It was in being called by name that Mary recognized Jesus and caught a glimpse of the resurrection. When Jesus called her Mary, she was then able to call him by name.

As followers of the Risen One, we are called to name those around us rightly and tenderly—both inside and outside our congregational walls.

We cannot settle for the generic and the stereotypical. Such language serves no one well. It marginalizes. It prevents the forming of relationships. And it restricts our vision for what God is up to in the world.

Instead, let us practice right and loving naming:

She is not Poor. Her name is Judy.
He is not Homeless. His name is John.
She is not Disabled. Her name is Wanda.
He is not Damaged. His name is Phil.

They are not Others. They are Sisters and Brothers, Children of God, Human Beings longing to see the Risen One. And all that prevents them from seeing Jesus is the lack of someone calling them by their right names. May we be the ones to do just that.

In March

by James Najarian

**Set on bare board, these objects play at desolation:
Three candles raise black wicks to our habitual air,
Ceding no brightness to the scene. Some daffodils,
Still merely buds, are tied together with a thread,
Then each one bundled like a fist inside a cast,
In its own swaddling. Surely they will never open.
The articles are commonplace, yet they still attract.
They hint at a fertility that we grow sure of.
These things will honey the darkness at another time:
The daffodils unfurling at an unknown hour,
The candles newly kindled by a watchful hand.
Thin flames will try themselves on undiscovered faces
And fashion us a spectacle of flesh and petal.
But not now. Now we have barrenness, and enough.**

James Najarian teaches at Boston College.

MCC has challenges with relief deliveries to Haiti

AKRON, Pa.—As of Feb. 17, Mennonite Central Committee continued to ship relief supplies to Haiti despite obstacles that slowed delivery. The Port-au-Prince port was still only operating at about 10 percent of the capacity it had before the earthquake, said Darrin Yoder, material resources manager. Alternate ports were available, but delivery was hindered because of distance or because the ports are not equipped with cranes to facilitate easy unloading. Airlifts are prohibitively expensive, said Daryl Yoder-Bontrager, area director for Latin America and the Caribbean, so they are used sparingly. When MCC did use an airlift to bring 70,000 pounds of canned meat into Port-au-Prince on Jan. 24, the shipment had to be rerouted to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, reportedly because of airport traffic.

According to Yoder, relief kits, heavy comforters and other supplies also are on the way and will continue. Their estimated arrival dates were Feb. 20 and Feb. 28.—*MCC*

'Bridges to (the) Cross' Convention 2011 theme

NEWTON, Kan.—Planners for the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2011 met for the first time Jan. 14-16 in downtown Pittsburgh, Pa., site of the next national gathering. After 2½ days of discussion, "Bridges to (the) Cross," and 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 surfaced as the theme and Scripture text for the convention on July 4-9, 2011. Pittsburgh, known as the City of Three Rivers, is connected by many bridges.

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Executive Leadership, says: "The committee recognized that the theme is twofold. First, as instruments of Christ's reconciliation, we too have many bridges to cross. Second, God calls us to shape our culture as ambassadors for Christ, instead of continuing to have our culture shape us. We are called to serve as bridges to Christ."—*Mennonite Church USA*

Teachers, students to 'step out of boat'

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Wilma Bailey, professor at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, encouraged Mennonite educators to help their students "step out of the boat" during her keynote address at the Feb. 4-6 Mennonite Educators Conference in Pittsburgh. Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Schools Council partnered for the conference, which carried the theme "Stepping out of the Boat: Courageous Faith for a Messy World."

Bailey spoke about Peter's courage to step out of the boat and onto the water to meet Jesus in Matthew 14.

For the second address, Tom and Christine Sine of Mustard Seed Associates spoke about the future facing educators and students. Current college graduates face a different world from what their parents faced, said Christine, but educators should help students see these challenges of global poverty and the economic recession as opportunities. Doug Neufeld Yoder, professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., spoke about creation care and education. Due to a Feb. 6 blizzard, we were unable to cover the final session with Luke Hartman as the fourth keynote speaker.—*Anna Groff*

Floods devastate Peru

Men work at a collapsed home in Lucre, Peru, where many have lost their homes, crops and livelihoods due to flooding. The heavy rains, floods and mudslides in southern Peru have left thousands homeless. Eastern Mennonite Missions appeals for funds for Peru relief.—*EMM*

Mennonite Mutual Aid confronts executive pay

GOSHEN, Ind.—MMA Praxis Mutual Funds and Mennonite Education Agency, along with two Catholic organizations, cofiled a shareholder's proposal with Goldman Sachs last November. The proposal asked Goldman Sachs to evaluate compensation trends at the firm. In January, the firm announced that its bonus pool was down 20 percent from 2007. But a Jan. 6 release from Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) said the change "does not go far enough. … Goldman's reduced compensation pool is a positive step,but bonuses still amount to over $16 billion, an average of $500,000 per employee." According to the release, the shareholder proposal asks the company to create an independent panel on executive compensation to evaluate its compensation practices in the context of industry trends.
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Choice Books sales fall

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Sales of Choice Books, an Anabaptist-related book-selling ministry, declined last year for the first time since 1985. Choice Books purchased or sold 5.39 million books in 2009, a nearly 3 percent decrease in sales compared with 2008. In 2009, the number of Choice Books displays grew to more than 10,000 nationwide. The year's best-seller was *Comfort for Troubled Christians* by J.C. Brumfield.—*Choice Books*

—compiled by Anna Groff

Schmidt completes 27 years at 722 offices

GOSHEN, Ind.—When Doris Schmidt logged off her computer Dec. 31 at Mennonite Church USA, she concluded 21 consecutive and 27 total years of work at 722 North Main in Newton, Kan. For most of 50 years she filled office positions at the denominational offices and at other places in Newton and North Newton, welcoming some changes and adjusting to others in office technology.

Her most recent appointment for the denomination began in 1988 as a secretary in the Women in Mission office. For nine years she edited the denomination's *Handbook of Information* and, from 1999 until the end of 2009, served as receptionist, finance assistant and associate editor for the *Mennonite Church USA Directory*. *—Mennonite Church USA*

Becker 'brought computers' to the denomination

ELKHART, Ind.—Larry Becker recently heard a phrase: "When you're on the last page, it's time to close the book." On Jan. 29, Becker closed a volume 50 years in the writing—the length of his service to the church. But the local systems administrator does not plan to stop adding pages.

His departure is a change, not a retirement. For the last half-century at the Newton, Kan., office, Becker, 69, helped first the General Conference Mennonite Church and now Mennonite Church USA advance technologically, leading the shift from typewriters to computers in the 1970s and staying on top of the rapid technological evolutions of recent decades, despite having no official training in electronics.

"He's the one who brought the computers to us," says Chris Graber, information technology helpdesk manager and systems trainer. "He's brought us into a technological age."*—Mennonite Mission Network*

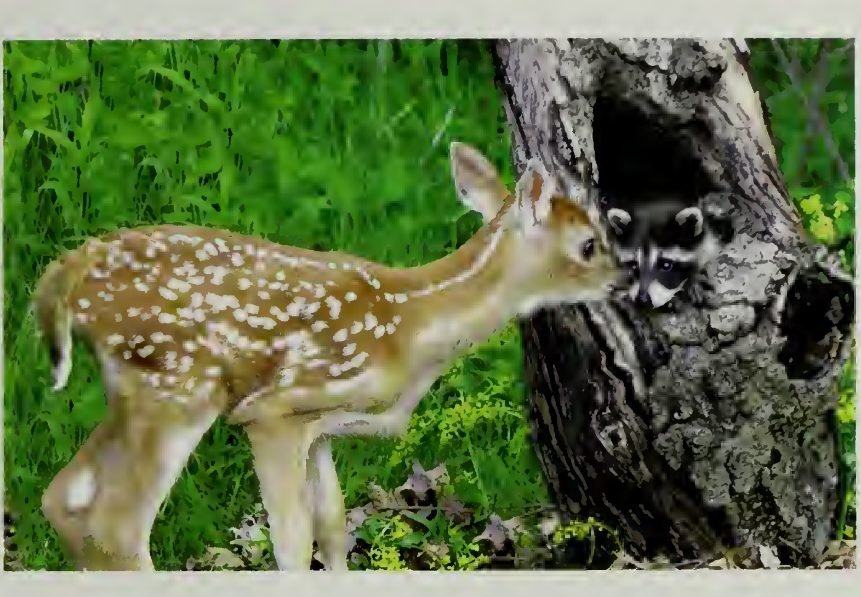
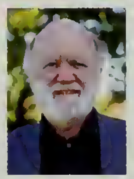


Photo contest 2009 winners announced

Wilford D. Yoder, Iowa City, Iowa, was a double winner in our 2009 photo contest. This shot, called "Making New Friends," won the creation/nature category. Yoder also won the illustration category. John Badertscher of Columbus, Ohio, won the still life category, Marcia Widmer of Iowa City, Iowa, won the work, service and play category, and Dennis Kaufman of Racine, Wis., won the worship category. Twelve people entered the contest.*—Everett J. Thomas*

New coordinator for Mennonite Men



NEWTON, Kan.—Mennonite Men announces the appointment of Don A. Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va., as the new coordinator of Mennonite Men. He will begin June 1. Yoder joins the organization from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., where he has served as director of seminary and graduate admissions since 1995 and director of seminary vocational services since 2008. Yoder succeeds Jim Gingerich, who has been the coordinator for Mennonite Men since 1998 and plans to retire.*—Mennonite Church USA*

MLK speech recovered

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—In 1960, Martin Luther King Jr. told an audience at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., they needed to be "maladjusted." Fifty years later, King's friend and co-worker, Vincent Harding, stood behind the same podium on the same stage to say that the message remains the same.

This year's celebration at Bethel included marking the 50th anniversary of King's speech as part of the now discontinued Memorial Hall Series. Earlier that day an overflow crowd listened to the speech played in its entirety.

Sondra Bandy Koontz, vice president of advancement, introduced the speech. Koontz said she went to get a recording or transcript of the speech, only to find that none existed. So she had an email appeal sent to alumni asking for any memories of the speech.

That prompted Randy Harmison, a Bethel graduate, to call Koontz and say he had taped that speech on his reel-to-reel recorder.

"I didn't know whether to shout, 'That's impossible' or, 'That's incredible,'" Koontz said.*—Bethel College*

4.6 million

the number of Colombians displaced by armed conflict since 1985. Most now live in severe poverty.—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

Authorized spirit medium?

Hilton Ebenezer Fyle of Columbus, Ohio, claims to be "an authorized spirit medium of God" in his book *The Christian Book of Wisdom, and the Book of God's Law*. According to the publicity of his book (www.oldmp.com/godslaws2007.htm): "The message in this book comes from God. Hilton Fyle wrote it down, and every page was approved by God before publication." Fyle writes: "When you see that things you have been taught for centuries are wrong, remember who is talking. It is God." Oh, and he also says he offers the book "with joy and humility."

If you go to the United States, don't drink the water

The 35-year-old federal law regulating tap water is so out of date that the water Americans drink can pose what scientists say are serious health risks—and still be legal.

Only 91 contaminants are regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act, yet more than 60,000 chemicals are used within the United States, according to Environmental Protection Agency estimates. Government and independent scientists have scrutinized thousands of those chemicals in recent decades, and identified hundreds associated with a risk of cancer and other diseases at small concentrations in drinking water, according to an analysis of government records by *The New York Times*.

But not one chemical has been added to the list of chemicals that are regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act since 2000.

Other recent studies have found that even some chemicals regulated by that law pose risks at much smaller concentrations than previously known. However, many of the act's standards for those chemicals have not been updated since the 1980s, and some remain essentially unchanged since the law was passed in 1974.

All told, more than 62 million Americans have been exposed since 2004 to drinking water that did not meet at least one commonly used government health guideline intended to help protect people from cancer or serious disease, according to an analysis by *The Times* of more than 19 million drinking-water test results from the District of Columbia and the 45 states that made data available.—*Charles Duhigg of* The New York Times

Scripture etched on guns sends a mixed message

Benjamin Busch, who was an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corps, thought his country actively separated church and state from its motives. And he figured that manufacturer Trijicon likely intended no particular malice by placing biblical references on its equipment, for instance, 2COR4:6, representing 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

In an essay on npr.org, he writes that he did not go onward as a Christian soldier but as an American, a Marine.

"By branding weapons with Christian messages," he writes, there is a deep and ugly blending of religion, politics and bloodshed, and it has unwittingly painted our government and military with the embarrassing language of crusade."

Busch continues: "Our efforts in the Middle East were complicated enough, and small symbols are examined carefully by our opponents. Based on my understanding of the teachings of Christ, he would be disappointed to see his gospel assigned to war of any kind in the first place."

ABC News

He concludes his essay with a verse "that has not been stamped on our weapons: 'But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you'"—Matthew 5:44.—*npr.org*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

> “Mass incarceration, as it is practiced in this country, is the quickest and most effective way to destroy the social fabric of entire communities, especially poor and minority communities.”
>
> *—Richard Shelton,* Crossing the Yard: 30 Years as a Prison Volunteer

Peacemakers unwelcome in Israel

On the weekend of Jan. 2-3, Israeli security officials denied entry to Bob Gross, executive director of On Earth Peace, and Alice Bartlett* after holding and questioning them for more than 12 hours. The two had come into Israel four days before a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation they were scheduled to lead arrived, in order to set up appointments and make further plans for the delegation’s 12 days in Palestine and Israel. After locking up Gross and Bartlett in Ben Gurion’s airport jail for the night, the Israeli authorities deported the two back to the United States and barred them from entering Palestine or Israel again for 10 years.

The remaining 13 delegates arrived safely in Jerusalem on Jan. 6. A member of the At-Tuwani team took over leadership of the delegation for the next 12 days.

This fifth annual Middle East delegation co-sponsored by On Earth Peace and CPT was, according to the delegation’s blog, an immersion in the realities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A nonviolent movement is on the rise. A separation wall continues to be built by Israel, dividing Palestinian families and communities and taking Palestinian land. Israelis live in fear of suicide bombers. Many Palestinians who live under blockade and military occupation continue eking out daily life without access to safe water, medical care or basic foods. Some Israelis and Palestinians who are weary of decades of bloody conflict are creating nonviolent pathways to resolving the situation.

*Name changed to prevent further scrutiny for subsequent trips to the Middle East.—*CPT*

Chemical care

- Number of personal care products the average consumer uses daily: **9**
- Number of unique chemical ingredients consumers are exposed to in those products: **126**

—*Yes! Magazine*

Three women’s rights leaders die in quake

Three leaders in the Haitian women’s movement are confirmed dead, victims of the quake. They gave women voices, fought against violence and made rape in Haiti a crime. One of the women, Myriam Merlet had been chief of staff of Haiti’s Ministry for Gender and the Rights of Women, established in 1995. She died after being trapped beneath her collapsed Port-au-Prince home at the age of 53. Magalie Marcelin and Anne Marie Coriolan also died in the quake.—*CNN*

World Day of Social Justice

In November 2007, the 192 member states of the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted Feb. 20 as the World Day of Social Justice. This year marked the second time it was observed internationally. Karen Zielinski, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, suggested “doing something simple for peace, … such as talking calmly and nonemotionally to a shopper who cuts ahead of us in a checkout line or [avoiding] violent-language phrases, such as ‘I would kill for a vacation.’”—*Spirituality & Health*

Online communication trends

- If Facebook were a country, it would be the fourth largest in the world.
- Online students outperform students who receive face to face instruction.
- One in six higher-education students are enrolled online.
- 80 percent of companies are using LinkedIn as a primary tool for finding employees.
- YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world—more than 100 million videos.
- Wikipedia has over 13 million articles, and studies have shown that it is more accurate than Encyclopedia Britannica.
- 200 million blogs
- 54 percent of bloggers post content or Tweet daily.
- 25 percent of search results for the world’s largest brands are links to user-generated content.
- 78 percent of consumers trust peer recommendations.
- Only 14 percent trust ads.
- 70 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds have watched TV on the Web, while only 33 percent have ever viewed a show on DVR/TIVO.
- 25 percent of Americans in the past month said they watched a short video on their phone.
- 1.5 million pieces of content (links, news stories, blog posts, photos, videos) are shared on Facebook daily.—*from Social Media Revolution by Eric Qualmann*

Whispers of resurrection

God waits for those without hope, Christ lingers among those plagued with death and fear.

by Isaac Villegas

> *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed.*—John 20:1

It was still dark. The dark night of Good Friday lingered into Easter morning. The Gospel of John does not say why Mary went to the tomb before dawn. Perhaps she couldn't sleep that night and had to take a walk. Her dreams were plagued with images of torture, remembrances of lost friendship, the trauma of extinguished hope. Perhaps she could do nothing else but return to the tomb. ▶

Her life didn't make sense anymore; she was not able to forget this man who embodied unimaginable love; Mary could not pull off the psychological acrobatics that are required to move on; to forget would be to kill Jesus again, to erase him from memory.

At the crucifixion of Jesus, they also crucified Mary Magdalene's soul. When the soldier ripped open Jesus' side, his spear also pierced her heart. Her love lies dead, buried in a tomb. Part of Mary died with Jesus. But something woke her up—the whispers of her risen lover?

Despite being a poor historian and textual scholar, Dan Brown, in his book *The Da Vinci Code*, has shocked us into seeing the profound love shared between Jesus and Mary. Yes, the story of Jesus is a love affair. But like most modern males, Brown can only imagine a man's love for a woman as sexual. Just like all the other trashy publications you can buy at the grocery store, Brown's book turns a woman into an object of sexual desire. Why else would Jesus care about a woman like Mary, if not for sex? Brown lacks the imagination to consider such divine mysteries.

Resurrection isn't obvious. Even while speaking with Jesus, Mary can't really see him.

The love of God drives the story of Jesus. This intimate love doesn't need to turn Mary Magdalene into an object of sexual gratification for her life to matter to Jesus. The Gospel of John tells a different kind of love story: Jesus is God's love made flesh, God's love setting hearts aflame. Jesus is the alluring grace of God, which draws all people into an intimate embrace. "For God so loved the world," John says. The pulse of God's heart sets the rhythm of the story. Mary drew near the rapturous love at the heart of God as she walked with Jesus.

How could she go on after God's heart stopped beating? Mary's life drained out of her as she watched the last of Jesus' blood drip from his side.

Mary Magdalene: a shadow in the night. She heads for the tomb where she can mourn. When she weeps, she feels alive. With tears Mary convinces herself that somewhere deep inside something still lives.

As she feels her way through the darkness to the tomb, shock like electricity runs through her spine. The stone is rolled away and the cave is empty. She runs to the disciples and shares the seemingly horrifying news: "They have taken the Lord out of the Tomb" (20:2). Someone has stolen the body. Then Mary returns to the tomb. She sees angels. "They have taken my Lord away," Mary says to them (v. 13). Not even the appearance of angels awakens the thought of something miraculous. Resurrection is completely unimaginable. The empty tomb is nothing but a sign of theft.

The darkness, in her soul and in the tomb, is so blinding that Mary can't even recognize the resurrected Jesus when he appears. "She turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus" (v. 14). Resurrection isn't obvious. Even while speaking with Jesus, Mary can't really see him. Jesus is incognito, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said in a sermon.

Then "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' " (v. 16). Mary. He calls her by name and the darkness is shattered. The light of Christ breaks through. Her love and Lover are returned. Everything can go back to how it was—those wonderful days with Jesus and the fellowship of love with the disciples. Mary will hold onto that precious life forever; nothing will separate her again from that love. But, strangely, Jesus refuses: "Do not hold on to me" (v. 17). Instead, Mary is sent on a mission: to share the good news of resurrection. She becomes the first preacher.

Christians are people who believe in the Lover's return. We are the disciples who receive the gospel of resurrection from Mary Magdalene. And with Mary we learn that our faith is a love affair without an ending. The last pages of the story are left blank. There is no closure. The story does not end with a woman's return to a graveside for another chance to mourn; resurrection refuses that version of the story. Nor does it end with the embrace of two lovers; Jesus doesn't let Mary hold on to him. Instead, Mary is sent on a mission, a mission where Christ shows up in the midst of those with whom she shares the news: "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you' " (v. 19).

Resurrection means that Christ is now a beckoning presence, saving us from ourselves by calling us into the places that overflow with divine love. The risen Jesus invites us into a pilgrimage of darkness, which is our stumbling journey to the heart of God. For in the Gospel of

Our Lover always returns, and he whispers the words of life near a tomb under the cover of darkness.

John we see how the resurrected Jesus waits at the site of death. We discover that God does not abandon those who wander in the darkness. In fact, that's exactly where Christ shows up: "The light shines in the darkness," John writes at the beginning of his story (1:5).

We discover that God does not abandon those who wander in the darkness. In fact, that's exactly where Christ shows up:The graveside account in John's Gospel instead is a glimpse into the mysterious outpouring of divine love: God waits for those without hope, Christ lingers among those plagued with death and fear.

Our Lover always returns, and he whispers the words of life near a tomb under the cover of darkness. The divine love affair begins again where death and anguish seem to reign. When we are drawn to such places, our Lover finds us, although he appears as a stranger. We are like Mary, unable to recognize the signs of resurrection. Yet the allure of God's grace sends us on our mission of waiting and listening and hoping—sometimes forever. For God's love is flesh—a wounded body near a tomb, still bearing the marks of death, holes in his hands and side.

Our Easter faith means that we wait with those who bear a strange resemblance to this One. Voices from this present darkness echo with the accents of our Lover. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, Jesus wanders around "incognito, as a beggar among beggars, as an outcast among outcasts, as despairing among the despairing, as dying among the dying." We linger with the hope that we may finally recognize our Lover among such as these.

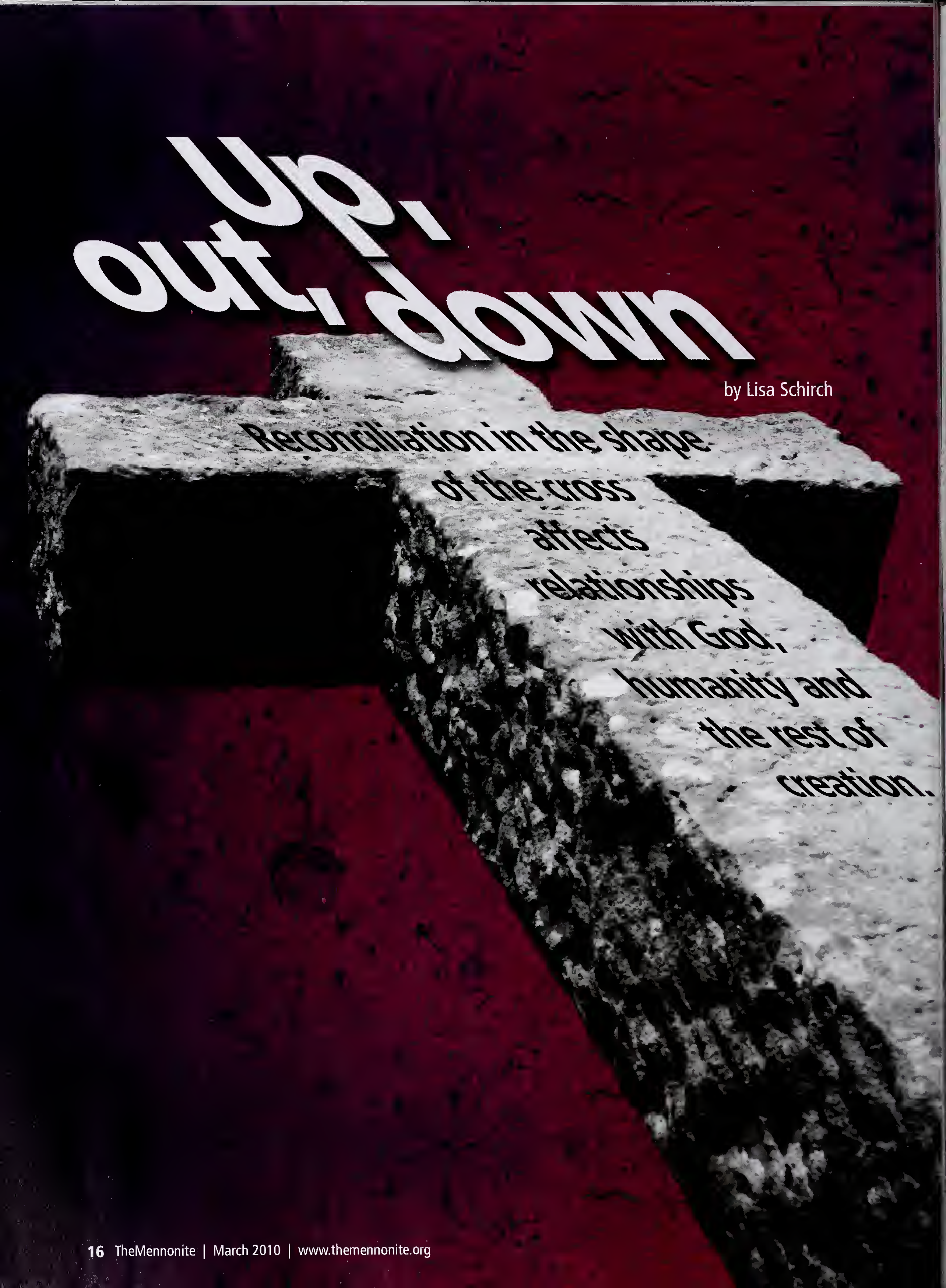
The whispers of resurrection: His voice is a deep sigh, a groan, in the night.

"While it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed."

Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Up, out, down

by Lisa Schirch



Reconciliation in the shape of the cross affects relationships with God, humanity and the rest of creation.

Relationship is the central theme of all religions. Most Christian churches foster a relationship up with God and may even scowl at thinking about peacebuilding or creation care as theological tasks. Real reconciliation with God happens in the shape of the cross: building relationships up, out and down to reconcile with God, with the rest of humanity and with the whole of creation.

On my Mennonite Central Committee term working with First Nations peoples in Canada in the early 1990s, Native elders taught me two things about Native religion. First, the most sacred principle of life, equivalent to the Lord's Prayer in Christianity, is to always remember, in every moment, "all my relations." Second, elders teach that every moment is a spiritual moment; a religious re-membering of "all my relations" doesn't just happen on Sunday morning.

The Native view of relationships is more expansive than just focusing on human connection to the Creator. A Native prayer remembers every element of Creation; beckoning awareness and connection to the song of the birds, the strength of the wind, the smell of the hemlock. This may sound precious and poetic, but as I grow older, this expansive understanding of religion as connection to all creation is profound.

The word religion means to connect, just like its latin root "lig," which is also the root of ligament, those strands of flesh that hold together muscle and bone. Holy, likewise, refers to the word whole; being related means being together. The word violence, on the other hand, means to disconnect, to use force and power to divide, punish and push away. Sin, likewise, has connotations of breaking or violating relationships.

Barbara Ehrenreich's book *Blood Rites* lays out the history of religion and violence. She argues that all religions originated as a counterforce to violence. As human beings first formed communities to protect themselves against lions, tigers or other large predators in the first days of humanity, and then against other communities with weapons who attacked them, they started the religious practice of binding themselves together. These early religious practices of building community, documented in our own Bible, formed the foundation of today's major world religions.

Peacebuilding is a religious task of reconciling people who are divided by conflict.

Peacebuilding is a religious task of reconciling people who are divided by conflict. It seeks to make whole (or holy) what humans have divided. Likewise the concept of creation care or environmental stewardship now appears to be reminding us of our connection to creation as a whole. As a planet, we live in our fragile corner of the universe. We are but a spot in the whole scheme of things. Here on this tiny planet, religions of all brands long for holiness, wholeness, relationship.

Americans have heard a lot about the environmental impacts of climate change. We already see the droughts, floods, intense storms and pictures on TV of melting glaciers and icecaps. Few media outlets are discussing the impact that climate change will have on people's relationships with each other.

We still spend more of our time judging others and building walls to keep people out by naming their behaviors as sin than we do building relationships with people we disagree with here in our own communities.

U.S. military experts identify climate change as a "threat multiplier" for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world, stating on record that climate change will expand the war on terror. As sea levels rise, dislocating millions of people and their livelihoods, as droughts and floods destroy farmland and homes and as governments collapse as climate-induced chaos sets in, there is a real fear that violent conflict will increase. While rich countries have historically been the chief consumers and polluters driving climate change, poor countries will suffer most from sea-level rise, increased droughts, floods and extreme weather. Some African and Latin American leaders already call climate change "an act of aggression by the rich against the poor."

The line between creation care and peacebuilding has disappeared. To work for peace means to work for a sustainable life. I remind myself of that as I bike to work at Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding in Harrisonburg, Va. And I'm reminded at home as we take out loans to install geothermal heating and a solar hot water heater. And I'm reminded as I seek ways of using only a proportionate share of the world's resources by setting off the carbon I produce on my weekly drives to Washington to promote peacebuilding there.

American Mennonites live in a divided world. We are divided from other peoples by our patterns of consumption supported by an active military presence around the world, paid for by our taxes. Mennonite pacifism seems like a remote theory calling out from a few ivory towers but disconnected from most of our everyday lives. Mennonite colleges and churches seem to spend more of their time trying to keep up with a consumer-driven culture than finding more authentic ways of building relationships with our neighbors near and far or in truly investing in a sustainable lifestyle in which each of us only uses our fair share and proportion of the world's food, energy and resources. We still spend more of our time judging other people and building walls to keep people out by naming their behaviors as sin than we do at building relationships with people we disagree with here in our own communities.

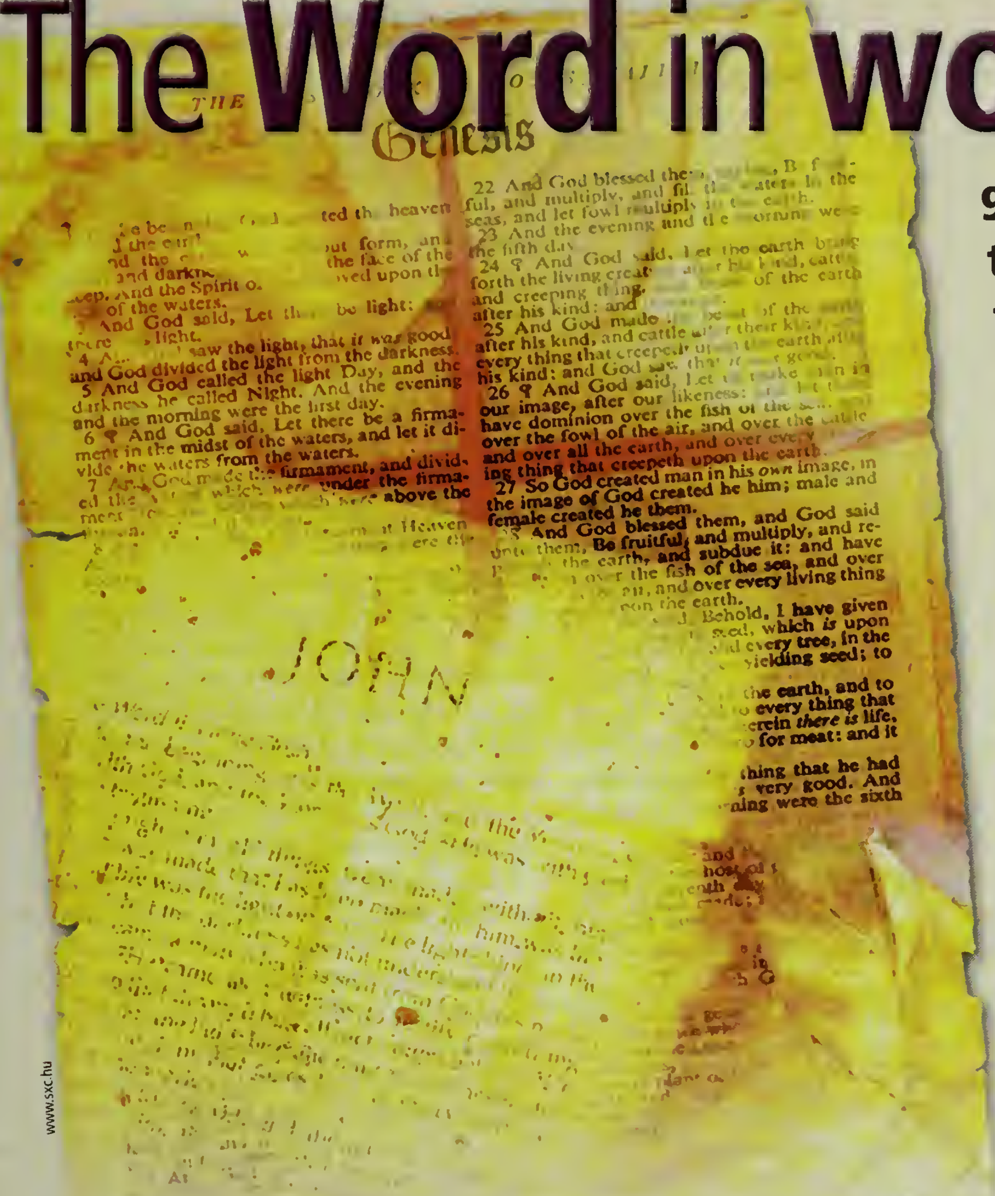
I grew up hearing my Mennonite community teach me to "live simply so that others may simply live." Simple living is the way toward a sustainable future. It is a holy way of reminding ourselves in every sip of coffee, every bite of banana, every sweater and pair of jeans and drive to the grocery store that we are connected to people and creatures all over this planet. Our consumption is part of life. But like indigenous peoples who say a prayer when they kill a deer or eat a meal for "all my relations" who have sacrificed something so that they can live, I wonder what it would be like for Mennonites to be so mindful of our relationships.

Every major religion has teachings on how to reconcile communities to God, each other and how to live sustainably with the rest of creation. I long for the Mennonite community to take more leadership in paving a way forward as our Anabaptist ancestors did. I'd like for Mennonites to redecorate our theology with a symbol of the cross that points us in three directions for reconciling and building relationships up with God, out with our neighbors and down with the Earth.

Let us seek not only on Sunday morning to relate to God but see each moment as an opportunity for mindfulness of our relationships up, out and down.

Lisa Schirch is professor of peacebuilding at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

The Word in worship



www.sxc.hu

9 ways to strengthen the reading and hearing of Scripture in worship

by Christine Longhurst

How much of your worship service is spent reading and hearing Scripture? 10 percent? 15 percent? More? Less?

In 2004, my doctoral thesis advisor, Dr. Constance Cherry, who teaches worship and Christian ministries at Indiana Wesleyan University, surveyed a wide variety of churches in the United States to see how much time was spent reading Scripture during worship. She discovered that in traditional, contemporary and "blended" churches, only 2 to 5 percent of the service was spent reading the Word. In most congregations, significantly more time was taken for announcements than for Scripture reading.

Throughout history, the reading and hearing of God's Word has been an integral part of Christian worship. Early worshiping communities seemingly couldn't get enough of hearing Scripture. In one of the earliest descriptions of Christian worship (155 A.D.) we read that "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits." By the beginning of the seventh century, a listing of suggested Scripture readings for each worship service (known as a lectionary) had been established.

Those who read Scripture should possess some natural gifts, and be willing to work at improving their public reading skills.

The great reform movements of the 16th century sought to keep Scripture at the heart of the church's life and worship. Lengthy Bible readings—often a chapter or two at a time—were part of every worship service. Some churches even provided a running commentary alongside the readings so that people could understand what was being read.

People demonstrated reverence for Scripture in many ways: through the careful selection of gifted readers, in the reverent way Scriptural texts were handled in worship, in the spoken and sung congregational responses before and after the Word was read and even in the beauty with which Scripture was copied and illustrated.

People understood the reading of Scripture in worship to be much more than just sharing information. There was a clear expectation that when the Word was read, God was again speaking to the gathered community.

Is this how you experience the reading of Scripture in worship? Do you find yourself listening eagerly and expectantly, anticipating a word from God?

If your congregation is interested in strengthening the reading and hearing of Scripture in worship, here are a few ideas to consider:

1. Pray before the reading of Scripture. Throughout history, congregations have prayed for the active presence of the Holy Spirit before Scripture is read. Traditionally, a prayer before the reading and preaching of the Word was called a prayer of illumination. A prayer like this reminds us we are dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit if we are to hear the word God has for us.

2. Use more Scripture. Instead of limiting the Scripture reading to the sermon text alone (as is the case in many congregations), consider using multiple texts throughout the service. Whether you follow the Revised Common Lectionary or devise your own reading plan, increasing the number of readings and their placement in the service can greatly enhance your opportunity to hear God's voice.

There are many places where Scripture texts can enrich worship: in a call to worship (Psalm 100), an invitation to praise (Psalm 33:1-4), a prayer of thanksgiving (Ephesians 1:3-14), an invitation to the offering (Psalm 116:17-18), a prayer of lament (Psalm 12) or confession (Psalm 51), the assurance of God's forgiveness following confession (Romans 8:1-2), a call to prayer (Psalm 55:16-17), the blessing of God as we leave (Numbers 6:24-26). Some congregations make a point of including a spoken or sung psalm in every service.

Reading the same passage of Scripture more than once in the same service can be meaningful. Using different voices and translations can help us hear the passage in new ways. An entire worship service can even be built around a single passage, exploring it textually, musically, dramatically and visually.

3. Use a variety of voices—young and old; men, women and children; newcomers and lifelong believers. What better way to illustrate that the Word of God belongs to the whole congregation?

4. Encourage and equip readers to read well. As is the case with other public ministries in worship, those who read Scripture should possess some natural gifts, and be willing to work at improving their public reading skills. Rather than being handed readings at the last minute, readers should be given a chance to study the texts and prepare them carefully in advance. Some churches put together a list of guidelines to help readers in their preparation; others have found it helpful to create a readers' group, where individuals can receive feedback and encouragement in a smaller setting. Two helpful books are Jack Hartjes's *Read the Way You Talk* (Liturgical Press) or Aelred Rosser's *A Well-Trained Tongue* (Liturgy Training Publications).

5. Use drama. In 2001, Wanda Vassallo, a student at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, studied the effect of adding drama to Scripture readings. She discovered that people remembered and responded to Scripture readings much better when they were acted out in some way than when they were simply read.

Not all Scripture passages lend themselves to dramatic presentation, but many do. Costumes and sets are not always required; a simple readers' theater approach can also be effective. Michael Perry's *The Dramatised Bible* (recently republished by HarperCollins) does a wonderful job of presenting Scripture in a readers' theater approach.

6. Interpret texts visually. While we continue to value print and oral media, we live in an increasingly visual culture. Why not consider adding a visual component to Scripture readings? If your church is set up for video projection, you can easily access a wide range of traditional and contemporary art on biblical themes. A Web site such as The Text This Week (www.textweek.com) offers a wonderful index of online artwork linked to Scriptural passages and topics. You may also explore the use of video. The Work of the People (www.theworkofthepeople.com), for example, offers thoughtful video clips and is searchable by keyword or lectionary date.

7. Sing Scripture. Many of the hymns and songs we sing are scripturally based. Some are metrical settings of complete scriptural texts; others are paraphrases or clearly allude to scriptural events or teaching. Acknowledging the scriptural basis of the songs we sing—either verbally or in print—is a good way to highlight Scripture during worship. Churches that use bulletins can simply note the scriptural source beside the song title in the worship order. For example: "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven" (Psalm 103). Or "Better is One Day" (Psalm 84). If you use video projection, it's easy to note the relevant scriptural text(s) on the first slide.

If you use hymnals, you can take advantage of the "scriptural allusions and references" index at the back to help you find songs to match the day's readings. If you sing more contemporary styles, you may need to do a bit more research on your own; while much praise-and-worship music is scriptural, accessing scriptural references is not yet as easy.

8. Allow Scripture to shape prayer. Allow the images and substance of scriptural passages to enrich the content and shape of your corporate prayer—what Russell Mitman in *Worship in the Shape of Scripture* (The Pilgrim Press) calls "the art of transposition." If you are interested in exploring how Scripture can help shape worship leading, check out Mitman's chapter on "Transposing the Texts." Another wonderful source for learning to pray biblically is Laurence Hull Stookey's *Let the Whole Church Say Amen! A Guide for Those who Pray in Public* (Abingdon Press).

9. Listen attentively, and with anticipation. The writer of Hebrews tells us the Word of God is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word we proclaim in worship is not merely a record of how God once intervened in history—it is a living continuation of that intervention. Those who read Scripture in worship are not merely teachers conveying information about God. Rather, they are the vehicle through which God's Word comes to life again in the presence of the gathered people.

Those who read Scripture in worship are the vehicle through which God's Word comes to life again in the presence of the gathered people.

Aelred Rosser, author of *A Well-Trained Tongue*, once wrote: "The Word of God is not a history lesson, though there is history in it. The Word is not a story, though it is full of stories. It is not a set of rules to live by, though there is much in it to guide our choices. No, the Word of God is a living and dynamic presence, achieving the very salvation about which it speaks even as the reader proclaims it."

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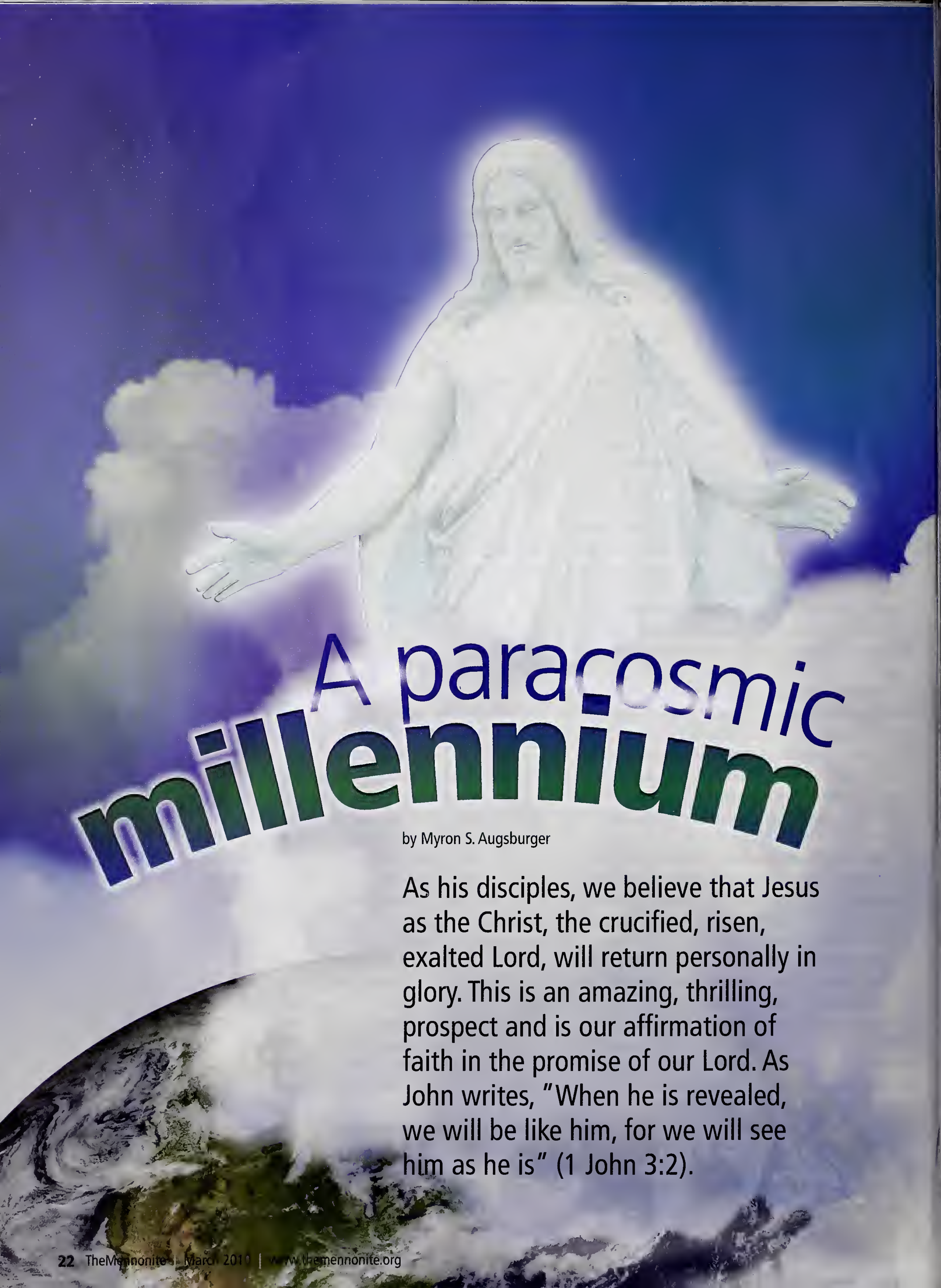


A paracosmic millennium

by Myron S. Augsburger

As his disciples, we believe that Jesus as the Christ, the crucified, risen, exalted Lord, will return personally in glory. This is an amazing, thrilling, prospect and is our affirmation of faith in the promise of our Lord. As John writes, "When he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

We walk now with the risen Lord as members of his kingdom.

Our belief in the coming return of our Lord is an affirmation of our faith in the factuality of his resurrection. When this faith in the victory of our risen Lord is taken seriously, it has meaning enough to correct problems in our materialism, our secularism, our nationalism, our liberalism, our conservatism, our individualism, all our isms, asms and spasms. But do we take seriously the dynamic aspects of this faith?

In our being disciples of Christ we need to recognize that we are walking now with the risen Lord as members of his kingdom. We are not just copying a hero from yesterday but are sharing his life as our Lord (Philippians 3:9-11).

On the one hand, this profession of faith is not a legalism but a spirituality of discipleship in the "obedience of faith." On the other hand, intimacy with the risen Christ is not simply an inner, mystical experience but an actual relationship through the Spirit. We find concrete guidance for this faith as we recognize that this risen Lord to whom we relate is the same Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee and taught us the will of God. His messages, whether found in John 12-17 on intimacy with him or found in the Sermon on the Mount in Luke 6 and in Matthew 5-7 as a manifesto of the kingdom into which we are born of the Spirit, these and other passages serve as our guide in discipleship.

Some may ask why Jesus needs to return, why he doesn't just take us to heaven when we die as believers? We believe in the resurrection of our Lord and his victory over all evil, over the powers, the realms of evil and the final enemy, which is death. His return is an expression of his ultimate victory, a message for all humanity and celebrated also before the hosts of heaven and the legions of hell. The millennium is to give an extended expression of that celebration before the final ordering of salvation history.

In this article I am appealing for a renewed emphasis on eschatology, the belief that history is linear and not simply a cycle repeating itself, that history is going somewhere. Saying that history is linear is to recognize that God has a purpose being worked out in time. This is seen throughout the Old Testament as "Heilsgeschichte," that is, salvation history, a linear movement that came to fulfillment in Jesus as the Christ. With the victory of our Lord we rest in his finished work of redemption (1 John 3:1-3, and Hebrews 4:3, 9-10), at rest from our efforts to relate in the intimacy of faith.

When I was younger, we talked much more about eschatology, we argued and debated whether we were amillennial, premillennial or postmillennial, but these debates were also enlightening. We did this with the recognition of mystery beyond what we can fully perceive. Once a man in his audience asked Bible scholar J. Edwin Orr, "What is all of this a, pre and post emphasis?" Orr quipped, "That is "a-pre-post-erous question." The Christian church has emphasized the millennium as one aspect of Jesus' return, but we now ask, How are we to understand this? How does this perspective of faith shape our lives?

In discussing our differences, we were at least giving attention to this mystery. Today we have become too silent on our eschatological hope. On the one side, we back off, as we

A glossary of terms

Millennium: the 1,000-year reign of Christ

Amillennialism: the belief that there is no such reign

Premillennialism: the belief that Jesus will return to earth before this reign

Postmillennialism: the belief that Jesus will return to earth after this reign

Dispensationalism: a biblical interpretation that sees a series of chronologically successive dispensations or periods in history in which God relates to human beings in different ways under different biblical covenants

Eschatology: a study of the final events in the history of the world

Heilsgeschichte: a German word literally translated "salvation history," used as a theological principle to read Scripture as the story of God's redeeming acts in history

Paracosmic: over and beyond the world

Telos: from the Greek; an ultimate end should, from being caught up in a Tim LaHaye (extremely dispensationalist) approach. On the other, we reject the view of those who deny any future beyond this life as we know it. But even with these cautions, we are too silent about affirming our belief that we live in the "eschaton," each day pointing us to our Lord's return.

I am appealing for a renewed emphasis on the scriptural teaching about "the second coming" of Jesus, our risen Lord. Such a renewal of perspective will help us live more selectively in this world and be "in the world but not of the world." Paul emphasized such a lifestyle of selectivity. For example, in each of the five chapters his first letter to the Thessalonians there is a reference to the Lord's coming, a motivation for holy living.

This risen Lord to whom we relate is the same Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee and taught us the will of God.

To stimulate discussion and focus on Christ and his kingdom rather than on details of the conclusion of history as we know it, let me mention a concept different from those mentioned. I suggest we think of a "paracosmic millennium." Often I have used the term transmillennial, as appears in Paul Erb's book on eschatology, to keep us from being so earthy. A better term may be paracosmic, and I'm using "para" as meaning over and beyond this earth, universal, pointing to something greater than an earth-happening. This concept extends to life beyond this globe, engaging what Paul called "the Third Heaven." To believe that our Lord is at God's right hand, at his throne in heaven, we can interpret the millennial celebration as a victory that includes but extends beyond the earth as we know it.

First, I affirm values in the several views mentioned. I support much in classical premillennialism (in distinction from dispensationalism), for the premillennial view speaks of a glorious victory of Christ, a "telos" as a culmination of his redemptive work that was wrought on this earth.

But I must ask those who hold this view, Why do some see his reign as only in the future, failing to take the gospel of the kingdom seriously today? He is Lord now and forever. Or why interpret the millennium as tied to this little globe, even while the victory is in but also beyond this world? Or on what ground can some interpreters suggest a future with salvation for people during the millennium in a style that suggests a pre-Incarnation pattern?

Second, I affirm much in amillennialism, especially the emphasis on the reign of Christ and the reality of his kingdom as it impacts the here and now. Kingdom priorities are important. As I heard Carl F. H. Henry say, the 20th century evangelical church lost the meaning of the kingdom and its priority of discipleship in our present life.

But speaking of the dynamic of Jesus' kingdom and its priority as shaping his church now, we should also emphasize a future telos, a coming celebratory culmination of his victory. Why should one who holds the amillennial view fail to emphasize such a telos, celebrating as well as including an expression of the victory of Christ in a final judgment of the "principalities and powers," powers that Paul says Christ unmasked through the cross?

Third, could not the promise of a 1,000-year reign of Christ, as to the future, be far more than "a reign on earth"? Could it actually be the celebration of his victory before the hosts of heaven and the legions of hell, before the whole universe, a recognition of his being the one victorious Lord? Such a celebration does not need to be tied to this globe but may well be a celebration that is a paracosmic millennium. Such a celebration will break open heaven to us, a celebration that confronts all the powers in heavenly places, one in which Jesus victoriously turns over his completed kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Such celebration is not in brevity but is a millennium. This even is the culmination of salvation history and unites us forever with the Father in his glory. We will join Jesus in the hallelujah chorus, praising the Father as all in all.

But some may ask, What about Israel? Paul says we of faith are the new Israel of God, children of Abraham. Of the Jewish people, Karl Barth has said that the Jew will serve God's purpose until the end of time, for wherever Jews are found by their very presence the people of any society are reminded of Yahweh. This sounds consistently biblical. When Paul says, "To the Jew first and also to the Greek," he is acknowledging the privilege of the Jew in having been the channel of salvation history. But Paul, speaking for Jew and Gentile, says of

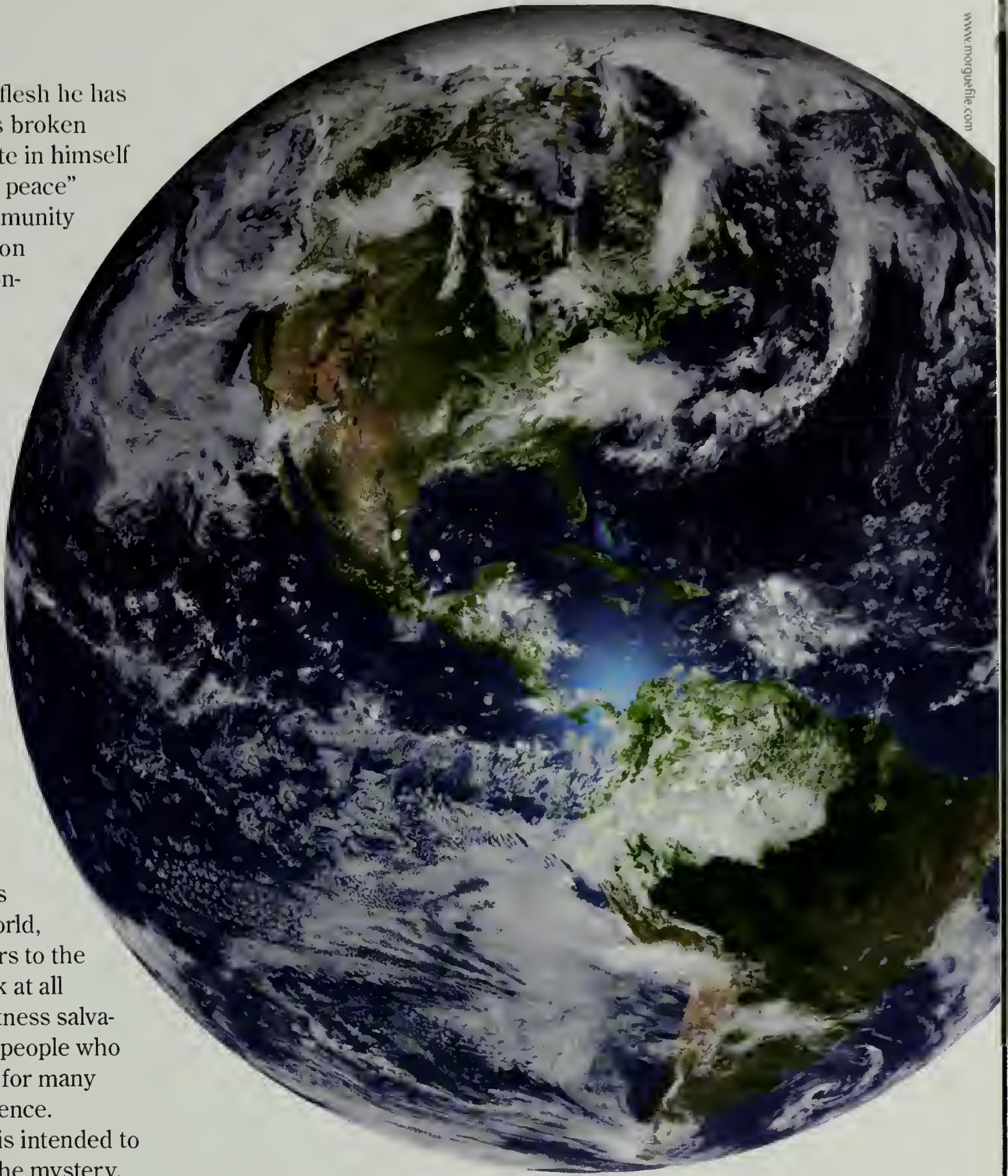
Christ, "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall ... [to] create in himself one new humanity, ... thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:14-16). This new community is the goal and fulfillment of salvation history and should motivate our conversation and loving witness to our Jewish neighbors.

This faith in the victory of Christ makes a radical difference in our lives now, for such awareness helps us in the family of God to live, in Paul's words, "as citizens of heaven" now. This was the vision of the Anabaptists according to the Schleitheim Confession in 1527, that our primary citizenship is in God's kingdom. This vision has the power to shape our lives today.

As Scripture says of Abraham, "For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). This perspective will help us hold loosely to the things of this world, practice a stewardship that ministers to the needy in fraternal relationship, look at all peoples as people of God's love, witness salvation in a spirit of empathy and be a people who live by God's peace and model this for many whose possessiveness leads to violence.

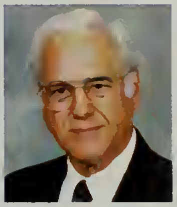
This idea of a paracosmic focus is intended to stimulate reflection. Even with all the mystery, this perspective is biblical in scope and focus. As believers we know Jesus' fellowship now in confessing him as Lord (Romans 10:9-10), we live in a reconciled fellowship as his disciples, we share in his body as a covenant community, we serve him in life each according to his call and we have here no continuing city but look for his glorious appearing and his eternal fellowship.

I conclude by asking your response. Where you agree with this perspective, your insights may well broaden the interpretation for our mutual enrichment. Where you don't agree, sharing your perspective may help us better understand the teachings of Scripture, especially Matthew 24 and 1 Corinthians 15. Perhaps these thoughts can help us get the conversation going again. "Maranatha. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."



www.morguefile.com

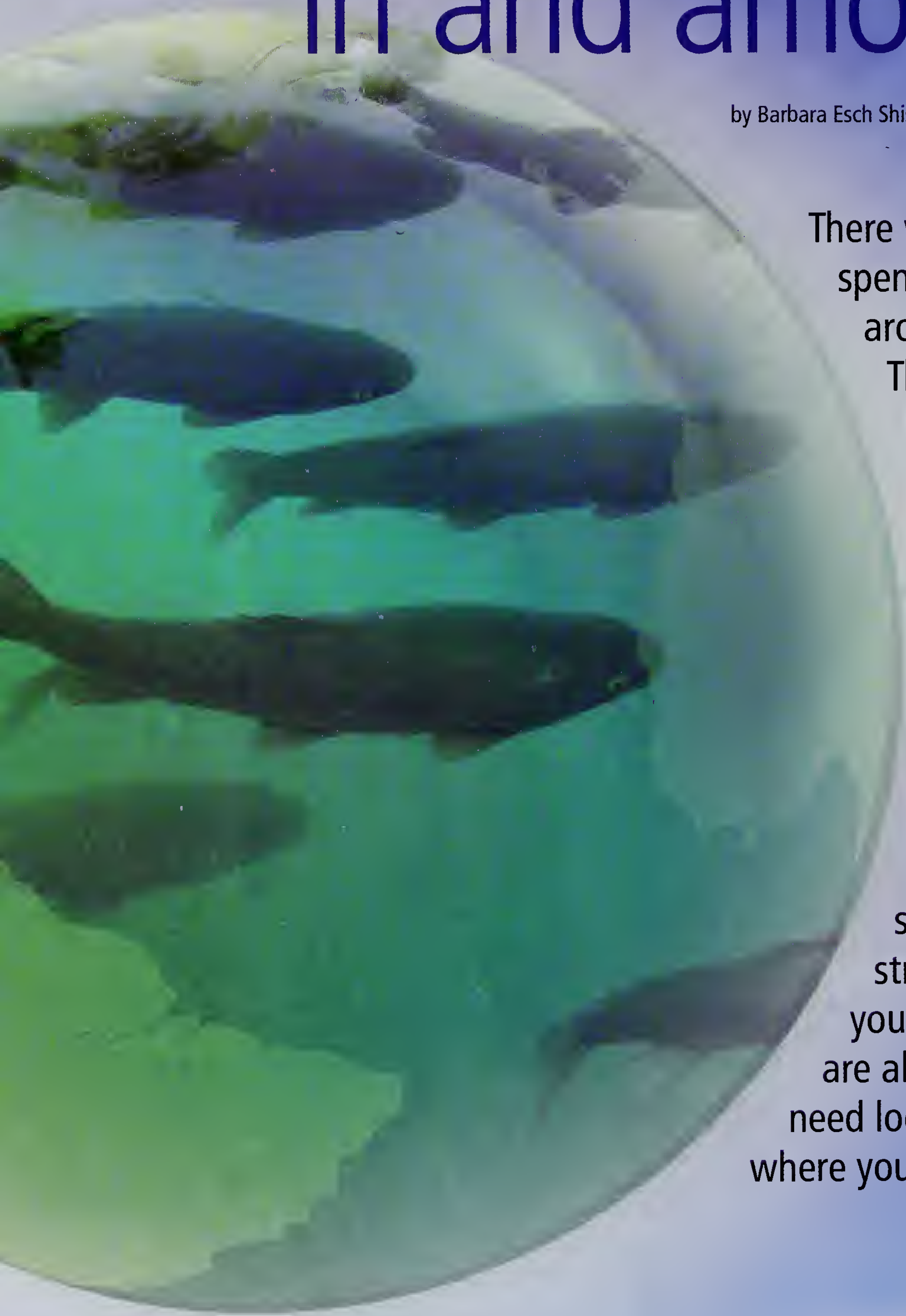
Speaking of the dynamic of Jesus' kingdom and its priority as shaping his church now, we should also emphasize a coming celebratory culmination of his victory.



Myron Augsburger is a member of Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

God's realm in and among us

by Barbara Esch Shisler



There were once some fish that spent their days swimming around in search of water. They darted here and there, anxious and confused. They asked each other, "Where is the sea?" But none of the fish knew the answer. When they met a wise fish and asked their anxious question, the wise fish answered, "If you would stop swimming so busily and struggling so anxiously, you would discover that you are already in the sea. You need look no further than where you already are."

How troubling events can teach about ourselves, God and the possibilities for love

In Luke 17, at the beginning of a teaching about future events, Jesus answered the Pharisees' question about when the kingdom of God would come. He said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will people say, 'Look, here it is or there it is.' For in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." A footnote adds "or within you."

"Realm" is another word for kingdom. To me, it's broader, more open, more mysterious, just as Jesus described the kingdom of God to be. The Sufi legend about the fish looking for the sea illustrates a realm of the Spirit that we inhabit often without recognizing it.

Annie Dillard wrote about fish in her book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*: "Fish are hard to see … the very act of trying to see fish makes them almost impossible to see. They manage to be so water colored."

But we're not talking about tropical fish, exotic reds and purples swimming in the aquamarine waters of the Caribbean. We're talking about your everyday bluegills or carp, fish like you and me, swimming around in ordinary waters. We are people in the realm of God who dart about anxiously, looking for God when God is the element in which we live. God flows all around us and even in and through us, just as fish breathe the water that keeps them alive.

Remember Mary who sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him and drank in the loving nurture of his presence? Remember Martha rattling around the kitchen in a stew because she had to get the dinner ready and her spiritually-minded sister wouldn't help?

I identify with both. I love to sit at Jesus' feet like Mary, but when I'm working at preparing dinner for company, I get stressed. People are hungry and want to eat. It's a lot of work, and I never know if it will be enough or if everything will turn out right.

I would have been upset to be reprimanded by Jesus for being worried and distracted. I'd have been even more upset to be told that my sister was doing the right thing. This story ends without us learning how Martha responded to Jesus. Did she accept what he was saying to her? Did she change?

Jesus' words to Martha were a confrontation, but they were also an invitation. Jesus knew and loved Martha, just as he loved Mary. His desire for Martha was filled with compassion. He knew that what she so deeply needed was to be with him as friend and teacher and Savior. He was there to show her the way of God, a way of peace and joy and love.

This experience for Martha was potentially a moment of conversion. As Carolyn Gratton points out in *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*, it was an opportunity for a complete reordering of the old Martha, who lived anxiously and angrily, an opportunity to begin the metamorphosis of a life transformed. Such opportunities may come as a shift, a crack, a ray. They come from inside or outside. They are so real that they make us catch our breath or stagger or even fall on our faces. Something old has to die because something new is struggling to be born.

It's both disquieting and hopeful to know that any event of our lives can be the beginning of change.

It's both disquieting and hopeful to know that any event of our lives can be the beginning of change. It can be as large as the death of a loved one or as small as a word someone casually says to us. All life offers us life if we can but breathe in the water of the realm of God. Letting go of demands to have things our way—to control, manipulate and force things—frees us to swim freely in this boundless sea.

I think Martha didn't drop her dinner preparations and go sit with Mary at Jesus' feet. I doubt that the words of Jesus had much immediate effect on her type of personality. I'd like to believe, though, that his words stuck somewhere in her mind and eventually surfaced enough for her to pay attention. Maybe one day she thought, I believe I could stop working and sit down and be still and pray and meditate on what Jesus has been telling me. Maybe at small points along the way of her life in the next weeks she shifted

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in her behavior and chose along with Mary the position of sitting at Jesus' feet.

The Apostle Paul had a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus, but most of us have small conversions as we travel our roads. Conversion happens when we pay attention. Small opportunities can slide right by us if we aren't paying attention. We are often too distracted, too oblivious, too numb to notice when the voice of God speaks. What we lose then is the invitation and the opportunity to experience the reign of God fully and freely in our lives and in our world all around us.

I have to take time to look and listen to God through the various ways God speaks.

I have a little ritual I use when I am stopped short by some experience that is trying to get my attention. It could be called a Martha moment. The experience may be, like Martha's, that I am suddenly made aware that I am terribly upset. It's not a passing annoyance. It's genuine anger. I will first say to myself, "This is a sin. Stop it." Then I may remember what I've been taught: "Anything that happens is material for spiritual growth." This is an invitation and an opportunity for deepening my spiritual life.

So I have three questions to struggle with in any troubling event:

What can I learn about myself?

What can I learn about God?

What are the possibilities for love (in other words, what is God's will)?

These aren't easy questions with easy answers. I have to face myself and my sinful tendencies. I have to be willing to know myself with all the murkiness that hides in my shadows. I have to take time to look and listen to God through the various ways God speaks. For me, that usually means silence, prayer, Scripture, meditation. The hardest question of all is: What are the possibilities for love, which is the bottom line when we ask what God's will is.

Suppose Martha asked and found answers to these questions. What could she learn about herself? We might be able to help her: controlling, putting higher value on doing than being, maybe trying to make a good impression.

Second question: What could Martha learn about God? She should be so fortunate, having Jesus right there to tell her. A relationship with God is better than an impressive dinner. God loves her so much that the Messiah will interrupt his teaching to listen and respond to her and try to open her eyes to the truth. God knows Martha has a gift that can be made whole and used for the world and for her happiness rather than for her frustration.

Third question: What are the possibilities for love? They are as endless as her imagination and God's own Spirit. That love is so profound and far-reaching that it is breathtaking. It is a love that changes everything.

Life brings us all shakeups, disappointments, crises. Maybe what we have built our lives on suddenly starts crumbling. Maybe we suddenly don't know why we are spending our lives doing what we're doing. Maybe some painful event shakes us to the core.

One such painful event happened to me last summer.

My husband, Harold, and I had a dog for eight years, a cairn terrier we loved very much, a dog we called perfect because she was so gentle and friendly and good. Our gentle dog was attacked and killed on the road by a neighbor's dog as I walked with her on a leash past his house one peaceful July evening. The terrible memory of that violence, the feelings of pain, fear and anger are still with me, though they have softened a lot. I struggled with my three questions and I have learned some things about myself and God as I swim in the sea of God's presence. But I am still confronted with the hard possibilities of love.

Jesus, in the form of my husband, said one day. "I think when we get our new dog, we could invite the neighbors whose dog killed ours and some of the other neighbors who have been emotionally and physically involved in what happened to come to our house and celebrate with us."

The very idea shook me. In order to do this I had to breathe the waters of the realm of God. This sea of abundant life flows though our lungs, holds us suspended in the eternal and provides the freshness of grace as we swim in the tender mercies of God.

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The dilemma

You go to a doctor
with a specific problem.
After your consultation,
the doctor tells you
that you need a certain
many-syllable medicine.
You trust the doctor
to know what to prescribe,
but the cost of the pills
is astronomical.
What can you do?

MAY CAUSE DROWSINESS
MAY CAUSE DIZZINESS
WARNING: State or Federal law prohibits transfer of this drug to any person other than the person for whom it was prescribed.

The cost of medicines

You can do something about it.

by Glen E. Miller

An office visit—Part 1

I went to see my cardiologist (yes, even doctors go to the doctor sometimes). The cardiologist said I needed an antibiotic for the cough I'd had for three weeks. He asked me if I had drug insurance. When I replied that I did not, he said, "Well, that rules out the medicine I was going to give you because it costs $550 for a 10-day supply." He decided to give me a medicine that costs "only" $110. When I asked about the less expensive medicine, he said, "Actually, the $550 antibiotic is a repackaging of an older form of the same medicine. The pharmaceutical companies do that to extend the patent so they can charge a higher price." He assured me that the older medicine was just as effective as its newer, more expensive form.

The older antibiotic cleared up my cough. I decided to question my doctor when I returned (see "An office visit—Part 2" below); I wanted to find out why he would even want to prescribe a medicine that cost five times more than the one he ended up giving me.

You should not assume your doctor is giving you the least expensive form of medicine.

The patient's point of view

As consumers, advertising plays a role in fixing certain drugs in our minds (and in doctors' minds) as the medicine for a given condition. Some patients want the latest drug they learned about from an ad during a Bears-Colts football game or on the evening news. You may appreciate it when your doctor gives you a starter sample of a new drug, but you may end up paying more for filling the full prescription for the new medicine than you would have paid for a generic alternative.

Many patients assume their doctor knows the details of their insurance policy. This may not be the case. Your doctor is probably unaware of your policy's specifics, such as the amount of your copay and whether or not you carry any supplemental insurance, such as prescription-drug insurance.

Some people may not feel comfortable talking about money with their doctor. One woman said she did not want to be perceived as questioning her doctor's authority regarding medicine. She spoke with her pharmacist instead, asking the pharmacy to call the doctor to find out if a less expensive alternative was available.

The doctor's point of view

Most doctors are busy people, and unless you bring up the subject of cost, it may not be discussed. You should not assume your doctor is giving you the least expensive form of the medicine. Doctors are well aware of the recently instituted "$4 per month per drug" put forth by pharmaceutical companies and may prescribe with that in mind. (See box on page 31.) However, patients should not assume that is the case.

Many doctors have stopped seeing drug representatives and accepting favors. Providers who work with mentally ill patients may continue to see drug reps because they need the samples as starter medicines. For these patients, the cost of medicines in some cases needs to include the cost of blood tests to monitor the effectiveness of those medicines.

How do doctors decide what to prescribe? According to studies, a doctor will generally remember several medicines for a given situation. Say you have a nasty cough. Your doctor will recall the drugs to treat bronchitis, think about each drug's effectiveness as applied to your case and weigh that against possible side effects. Most doctors seldom consider the cost of the medicine they prescribe.

Likewise, few doctors prescribe medicines because of the drug company that produces them. Drug companies hope their marketing will create a fixed response in a doctor's mind. When you come into the office with knee pain due to arthritis, it may be that Advil automatically springs to your doctor's mind as the medicine of choice. Doctors tend to remember most drugs first of all by their proprietary (more expensive) names rather than their generic (less expensive) names. For instance, Zocor may more readily spring to mind for the treatment of high cholesterol than the generic name Simvastatin.

An office visit—Part 2

When I saw my cardiologist six months later, I reminded him of our previous conversation and asked, "If you felt the older, cheaper medicine would do just as well, why did you initially prescribe the newer medicine that was five times more expensive?"

The good doctor went into a rather long explanation that can best be summarized by saying he thought the newer medicine is what I would want. After I expressed my concern about the high cost of health care in general, the cardiologist looked over the other medicines I was taking and changed one *of them to its generic form. This change reduced the cost of that medicine from $1.85 to $0.59 per day—a savings of $463 per year.*

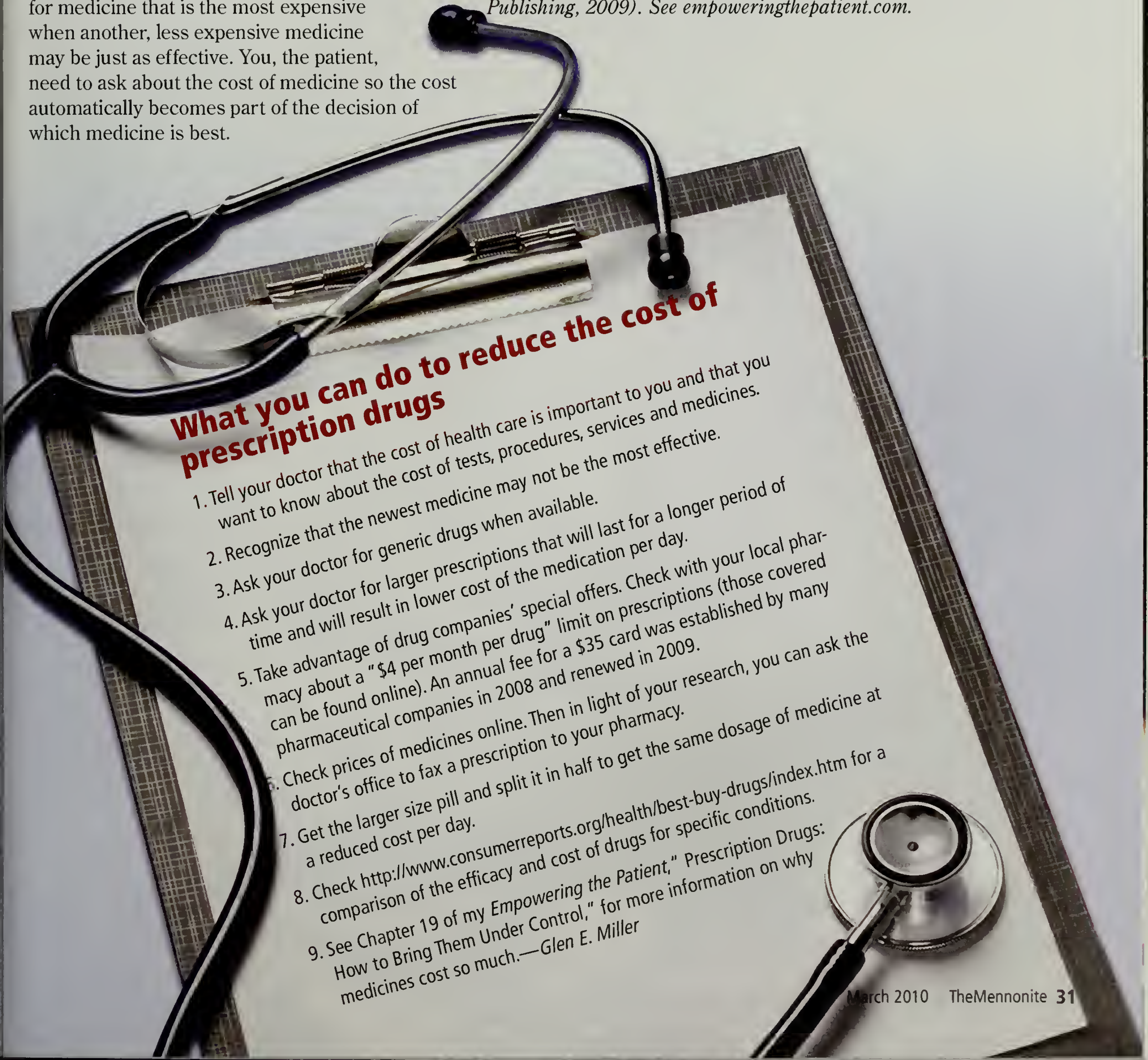
Later I took advantage of the special drug company offer of $4 per month per drug and saved an additional $167 per year on this medicine for a total savings of $630 a year—or $52.50 per month.

Remember ...

Several things should now be clear. Doctors don't automatically pay attention to the cost of the medicine they prescribe, they likely won't know your insurance status and they feel the pressure of a limited amount of time with each patient. As a result, you may be given a prescription for medicine that is the most expensive when another, less expensive medicine may be just as effective. You, the patient, need to ask about the cost of medicine so the cost automatically becomes part of the decision of which medicine is best.

> You may be given a prescription for medicine that is the most expensive when another, less expensive medicine may be just as effective.

Glen E. Miller worked as a primary care physician and administrator more than four decades, mostly in Ohio. He's a member of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. This article is excerpted from his book Empowering the Patient: How to Reduce the Cost of Healthcare and Improve Its Quality *(Dog Ear Publishing, 2009). See empoweringthepatient.com.*



What you can do to reduce the cost of prescription drugs

1. Tell your doctor that the cost of health care is important to you and that you want to know about the cost of tests, procedures, services and medicines.
2. Recognize that the newest medicine may not be the most effective.
3. Ask your doctor for generic drugs when available.
4. Ask your doctor for larger prescriptions that will last for a longer period of time and will result in lower cost of the medication per day.
5. Take advantage of drug companies' special offers. Check with your local pharmacy about a "$4 per month per drug" limit on prescriptions (those covered can be found online). An annual fee for a $35 card was established by many pharmaceutical companies in 2008 and renewed in 2009.

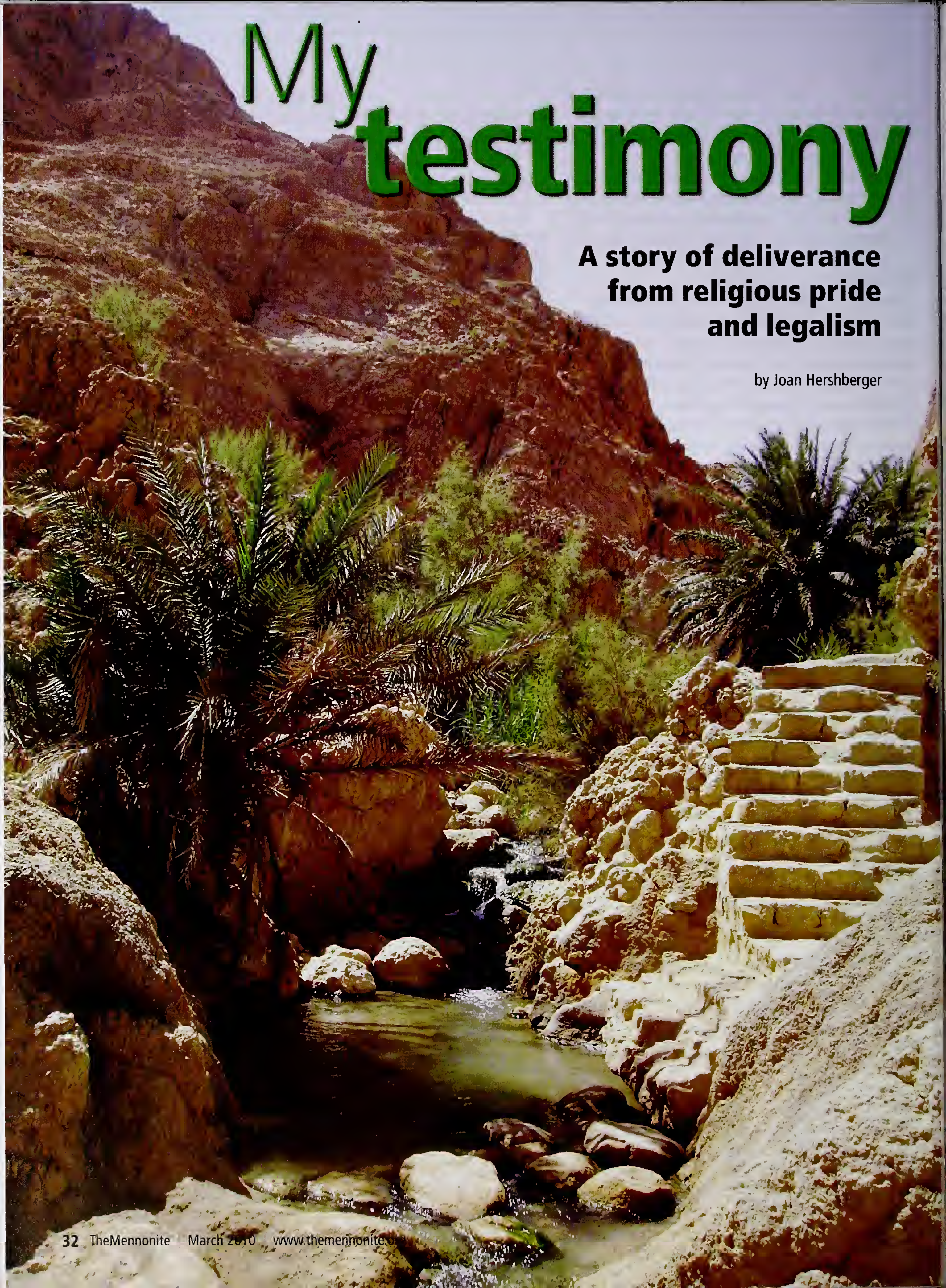
. Check prices of medicines online. Then in light of your research, you can ask the doctor's office to fax a prescription to your pharmacy.

7. Get the larger size pill and split it in half to get the same dosage of medicine at a reduced cost per day.
8. Check http://www.consumerreports.org/health/best-buy-drugs/index.htm for a comparison of the efficacy and cost of drugs for specific conditions.
9. See Chapter 19 of my *Empowering the Patient,* "Prescription Drugs: How to Bring Them Under Control," for more information on why medicines cost so much.—*Glen E. Miller*

My testimony

A story of deliverance from religious pride and legalism

by Joan Hershberger



My story is not one of a miraculous deliverance from a life on skid row. Instead it is a miraculous story of God's amazing grace to deliver me from religious pride and legalism and the story of God's great faithfulness.

Born into a Christian home, I knew nothing but church, and we were there every time the doors were opened. Grandpa was the preacher, my parents were involved in church and we were expected to be "good examples." I had a happy, secure childhood and was basically a compliant child.

My first big change in life was when I married Lee Hershberger. Being shy, I had to learn to live with an extrovert—a real people person. But I grew to love it because I loved him and loved our life together. When we married, we moved away from our home communities and settled in one of the poorest sections of Indiana, in a community where for nearly 20 years we were involved in a small Mennonite mission.

There were not a lot of issues to grapple with because people could either fit into our self-made "boxes" or they'd go elsewhere. I am thankful for my upbringing and the many good things I learned, but at this point I was allowing religious pride to slip into my life, and to my regret, too much of that service was done out of our own capabilities and the desire to "do" something for God.

There is a difference between doing and being. I knew I was doing and thought I was being, but after many years the Lord tugged at our hearts. We felt dissatisfied, dry and fruitless. The Christian life had to consist of more than we were experiencing. God was bringing us to the end of ourselves and our capabilities.

After much soul searching, tears and prayers, we felt the Lord calling us away from that church to another small Mennonite mission nearby. This church was just beginning to experience growth; the Spirit of God was moving among them, and God put us there at the beginning of a movement of God. How good his timing is! Our oldest children were teenagers by then, and I praise God now for directing us in that way. I don't know where they would be today if we had not been obedient.

I felt like Linus as my old security blanket was snatched away from me, but oh the refreshing and the pouring out of fresh water on my dry, thirsty soil! This was where I began to see a church function in grace instead of law. People were drawn to this out-of-the-way place in the middle of nowhere because of the love and the sense of God's presence that was there. It was a time of learning and growing and watching God do marvelous things in people's lives. What was one of the most difficult periods in my life turned into one of the greatest blessings.

People were drawn to this out-of-the-way place in the middle of nowhere because of the love and the sense of God's presence that was there.

But the blessings were not realized overnight. Being a church with so much diversity and so many changes did not come without problems. People did not fit into neat little boxes. During these years we served as an elder couple and later as mercy deacons—responsible for giving assistance to the physical needs in the church and in the community.

This is when we met "the cat lady." Answering a call for assistance for a homeless lady with many cats (the reason she was homeless), we allowed her and her dozens of cats to stay in our backyard shed for a few weeks—"just until we got her vehicle fixed and got her on her feet"—not the four or five months and many more cats later that it turned out to be. Becoming involved with people puts you in the middle of many situations and supplies lots of experiences—challenging us in showing love and grace—something we were still learning ourselves.

These midlife years involved watching our children struggle to find themselves and their life purposes, going through high school, college, weddings and giving us grandchildren. Meanwhile, the church grew to birth a couple more churches, experience tragedy at one and battle the enemy with trying to bring in some unbalanced beliefs. We saw spurts of growth and periods of discipling. Later it seemed like swinging doors, with some leaving and others coming.

I'll never forget the times of prayer with all the leaders prostrated on the floor before God, beg-

▶

ging him for right answers to those who felt differently about Christmas and wanted it to become church rules, or the time we arrived at church one Sunday morning with the piano gone. A family who had previously donated the piano left, and when they left, it left. Changes and difficulties always seemed to press us in to Jesus. Because of that, these were good years.

After serving there for 28 years, we figured we were about retirement age. After all, my husband was 72 years old, and I wasn't too far behind, all but one of our children and grandchildren lived within 20 miles of us, and we were comfortable. Lee loved his sales job, and his hours were flexible.

Then God went and upset the apple cart. One time while visiting our daughter in Mississippi, we were approached about going to Macon, Miss., to serve as interim pastor at Cornerstone Community Church. How absurd was that! We laughed it off for a while; after all, Lee had never been a "pastor," had only a few short terms of Bible school and was not educated. Surely not us. But the Lord nudged us, and we thought maybe we should at least pray about it.

Life was good there. Then the big blow came: Lee had cancer.

After a while, we decided to move. In 2002, we sold our home to our son, downsized and moved 700 miles from most of our family and from where we fully expected to spend our final days.

The years since then have been some of the most rewarding and fruitful years of our lives. We had so much joy in obeying God's call again. We loved Mississippi. We loved the church there and the people in it. Life was good. Then the big blow came: Lee had cancer. He was in remission for a short time, but it was unrelenting. He fought a courageous battle and never complained, but less than two years later, in 2006, the Lord took Lee home to heaven.

Everything I had known for over 53 years was suddenly gone; my world came crashing down around me. I had been through difficult times before—the church transition, sleepless nights praying for children who were "trying their wings," dealing with church problems—but I had never experienced the death of a spouse. But because I could look back at mile markers along my life journey and see where God had been faithful, I felt assured he would not fail me now. Lee's prayer was answered, and he lived until he was able to personally pray a blessing over each of his 21 grandchildren. His prayer from Philippians 1:12-14 was realized. "Lord, after this suffering, let it be said that what has happened to me has served to advance the gospel. As a result, make my Savior clear to all those around me. Because of my suffering and willing perseverance, cause others to be encouraged to speak the Word of God more courageously and fearlessly." God was so faithful.

It is a new life for me, but God is teaching me to trust him. One of the hard lessons I had to learn was to accept what God had allowed in my life and the new role he had given me, that of being a widow. He had allowed me the role of wife and mother, and I loved it, but I did not ask for this role. I had to find rest in God's promise in Psalm 138:8: "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever" and in Lamentations 3:22-23: "His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

So what have these life experiences taught me? One thing I'm learning is that I am never done learning, and I hope I never will be. God is teaching me still. But there are some things I am realizing more and more.

I am learning the importance of relationships and the unimportance of things. Cultivate relationships now for future memories, which will mean so much then. Build your marriage so that when your children are gone you will still have a marriage. Build memories with your children so that they have roots to hold them when they take wing and when the ground shakes beneath their feet. Build friendships; don't wait to be hospitable or be shown hospitality. Get rid of the stuff in your life so there is room for people.

I am learning to walk by faith, not fear. God regards faith highly and has a strategy for developing it. He gets us climbing after him, and when we are committed to the path, he points down, and we notice there is no safety net. God's best moments for us are when we dare all on him alone, when all our usual ropes and nets have been removed and all we have is him. Real faith loves tough situations, for that is where God works most often.

It sure felt like all security nets were gone when we changed churches or moved to Mississippi. Changes can be scary. Beth Moore says: "We can refuse to walk in obedience to God or cower in fear from our calling, and he will undoubtedly still accomplish his agenda. As for us, however, we will pass up the fulfillment of our entire life purpose and will miss a mighty work." I am still learning not to fear the future, being alone, the what ifs. God says, "Trust me," not "Trust me not to let it happen." Again I remind myself, He's been faithful in the past. Will he not be faithful in my future?

I need to be grounded in the Word because that is where I find truth and strength. I can still hear Lee quoting something that impressed him years ago: "Like the hot dry winds of the desert drive away all sources of vegetation, so the fiery darts of the enemy drive away all traces of a Christian life unless it is fortified by the Word of God." Amen.

God is teaching me I need to grow from my difficult experiences. If we will be the same tomorrow as today, then we don't need a tomorrow. It's usually in the hard times that we grow the most, and I need those times.

Always, but especially in hard times, I need to keep my focus on God, not my circumstances. I try to look for small miracles and graces he sends my way to remind me he is there and cares. Little things, like running across a friend in a restaurant I can eat with, a note of encouragement, sunshine when I need it most.

Recognizing God's faithfulness to me through hard times in the past gives me hope for tomorrow. Hope allows us to see beyond the muck of today to the promises of tomorrow. It is not how well I started but how strong I finish that counts. A victorious life is only the sum of victorious days. So each day I need to remind myself of God's faithfulness and make that my focus.

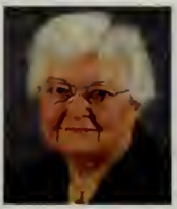
My life is indeed different these days. Living alone gives me freedom to do many things I did not do before. I want to fill my life with experiences, not excuses. Hospice meant so much to us when Lee was ill, so one new experience I enjoy is volunteering with them every week. I have had contact with many other widows in my area and try to encourage them. We all need to be encouragers—becoming oxygen to those around us—and I find that gives oxygen back to me. Someone once said, "One of the highest human duties, is the duty of encouragement."

As followers of Christ we are commanded to build others up by highlighting what's good instead of magnifying what's bad, by seeing them as unique individuals instead of stereotypes, by respecting instead of ridiculing, by forgiving instead of shaming, by modeling unconditional love instead of love with strings attached, by applauding each step of growth instead of saying, "They'll never change," by seeing their God-given potential instead of seeing them as problems to be handled. It's seeing them through the eyes of grace instead of law.

I want to fill my life with experiences, not excuses.

As I age, Psalm 92:13-15 has become increasingly special to me. Speaking of the righteous, it says: "They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap, showing that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Chuck Swindoll says: "No one fails to see that growing old has its difficulties and heartaches. It does indeed. But to see only the hot sands of your desert experience and miss the lovely oasis here and there (though they may be few) is to turn the latter part of your journey through life into an arid, tasteless endurance contest that makes everyone miserable." Oh, yes, I still have difficulties, times of loneliness, and I struggle sometimes with the what ifs, but God is faithful. At every milestone in my life, he's been there cheering me on, sometimes carrying me, sometimes giving me a little shove. He's never failed me yet, and I know he never will.

I read a magazine article a couple years ago by a women who was dying of cancer. It was titled "My Fantastic Final Journey," and she wrote, "None of us is promised tomorrow, which makes me wonder if maybe we all shouldn't be living as if we're on our final journey home." She goes on to say (and I agree): "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming, 'Wow. What a ride!'" What a ride indeed. And what a faithful God to ride with me!



Joan Hershberger is a member of Cornerstone Community Church in Macon, Miss.

Developing leadership for the church

Ed Diller is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

Current calls in secular and religious circles for leadership development seem particularly intense. What is driving this focus?

Our immense, complex world makes true progress difficult without some sort of collective effort. That effort is likely to be successful only with effective leadership.

For this reason, the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA has designated leadership development as a churchwide priority.

As moderator, I find the work and relationship with other leaders exciting. Uniformly, our leaders are grateful for the opportunity to serve. They tell me their leadership roles have been high points in their lives. It is exhilarating to worship with them, meet and learn about those committed to the church and envision together what Mennonite Church USA is called to be.

Though rewarding, leadership in the church has many challenges. I will touch on just three.

Impossibility of knowing the future. None of us knows the future. That lack of clarity makes direction setting difficult and imprecise. One leadership job is to envision and help shape the future. Leaders do so even while acknowledging that their vision is incomplete and inaccurate. They remain optimistic about what lies in front of them, knowing the Lord guides us continually (Isaiah 58:11) through all uncertainty.

We need to ensure that together we nurture and support our leaders.

Leading through change. Our call is to be a church that aligns itself with God's mission to reconcile all things. That call requires us to focus on the future instead of on the past or present. We need to adjust continually what we are doing in order to move forward.

Even as we adjust our direction and modify our thinking and our actions, we know that not all change is easy or good. Guided by the Holy Spirit, our church leaders at every level are called to help us maneuver between change and constancy and do so at appropriate times and pace. Making changes soon can also exhaust resources and energy for achieving our goals; making changes too late can impede their accomplishment.

Often the right choice is not immediately clear, and since no one likes to make mistakes, lack of clarity can lead to timidity, self-doubt and criticism. Such feelings and the resulting hesitancy can keep us from our mission.

Leading through conflict. Conflict often arises as a result of decisions and choices regarding direction, constancy and change or about the timing and pace of change. As a church, we've not always found clear paths to resolving conflict in healthy, life-giving ways, particularly when change itself often brings on the conflict. Unfortunately, rather than discerning together appropriate direction, we allow our conflicts (and sometimes anger) to focus on the people providing leadership.

How do our congregations, conferences and denomination call people to leadership roles? How do we ask people to assume responsibilities that will surely lead them into situations that will test their judgment and self-confidence and will involve conflict?

We as a church must embrace these issues. Conferences and congregations can begin this work immediately by blessing leaders in their midst and by dialoguing openly with them about current and future challenges. Our seminaries and educational institutions are well-equipped to assist us in this endeavor.

Just as important, each of us must examine our own feelings regarding leaders. Do we assume a posture of suspicion toward them and doubt their motives simply because they have accepted leadership positions? Or do we empower them?

We need to view people we tap for leadership as individuals called and committed to serving Christ. Seeing our leaders as focused on God's mission in the world will give a different tone to our discussions about leadership and change, about conflict and risk-taking. Doing so will also enhance our ability to call courageous, insightful leaders.

We must heed this call. The church needs a solid theology and philosophy of leadership as well as a practical means of developing leaders. We need to ensure that together we nurture and support our leaders.

May God equip us all to discern the future and join together in what God is doing. May our collective efforts enable us to live into our vision (at left).

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

'They seek a city'

The process of seeking a new home in an unfamiliar community brings back many memories. Just five days after Sara and I wed in July 1975, we packed our belongings in the smallest of cars and set off across the country to begin graduate studies in California. In the next 14 years, we traversed the continent twice and the Atlantic Ocean four times in a series of 12 moves that eventually landed us in Virginia, where we have resided for more than 20 years.

Like many of our peers, we know something of relocation, although not the hardship that drives millions of others into exile seeking refuge far from the homes they may never see again. Many people in our world, not by choice, experience disruption, dislocation and severely traumatic junctures in their lives.

Our own moves, in contrast, have been mostly by choice. We were called by opportunities for ministry and training, for service with God's people in various locations. Several times we had the benefit of others preparing for our arrival and helping arrange the lodgings that accommodated us. More often, we crossed hundreds or thousands of miles in pursuit of a decent dwelling place, seeking a new abode that became our base for building new relationships.

What will it mean to reside in a new community? How will we find ways to be knit into the social fabric? Who will help us discern the places of opportunity and need in a given locale? Can we learn the language and the song of our new setting?

Last night in the dark it was hard to find the markers, the orientation points. Which are the best pathways across town? How do we begin to recognize key landmarks? Where are the gathering places, the spaces for community to happen?

I sometimes recall how a series of choices unfolded in another time of major transition as we arrived in Virginia two decades ago. It took us 24 hours to select a vehicle, two days to choose a house and six months to consider the range of congregations and make a commitment to one.

Having choices in a time of transition is indeed a privilege and a gift. It takes time to test where the Spirit of God seems to be hovering, brooding over the waters and nurturing possibilities from hope and dream into reality.

Will there be joy in this new setting? Where are those porous places in the social fabric that will open enough to draw us in? Is the calling that brought us here steady and flexible enough to knit us into a new weave of connections?

We are a people on the move. In a recent year, more than 38 million Americans moved (more than 16 million households). Almost 5 million moved to a different state. Stated reasons vary, but most involve seeking opportunity, more than fleeing from hardship.

The biblical stories abound with arrivals and departures of strangers, pilgrims and sojourners of many sorts. The ancient world of the Near East was familiar with intercultural exchanges, situated at a crossroads that posed constant risk and opportunity. Hospitality is not merely a virtue and a cultured art under such conditions but an ethical code for survival near desert and wilderness. The arts and graces of hospitality when life depends on it are retained through centuries in the Middle East, despite the price that comes with vulnerability.

My beloved and I drew on those traditions in our wedding service. With Hebrews, we aimed our hopes toward a future that would likely involve many transitions. In our vows we declared: "As members of a kingdom beyond this earth, we will be strangers and transients in a world that does not know Christ; but we commit ourselves to establish a homeland of the heart."

We have found this hope amply fulfilled, finding kindred spirits along the way who could help us be at home wherever we came to land for a season, notably California, Eastern Europe, Chicago and Virginia. In recent years, as we led a more settled life ourselves, it has been a privilege to help others be at home in our community. We have also helped some venture forth in answer to their calling.

Resonating with Hebrews 11, we acknowledge that this process of letting go of the comfortable patterns of the past and embracing the challenges of an unknown future makes sense only within the saga of God's people placing trust and faith in God. The ultimate questions of our lives do not turn finally on whether we move away or stay in place but around the hope we have in God's journey, the incarnation that reveals a God who sets up a tent to dwell among us. Like Abraham, according to Hebrews, we "look forward to the city … whose architect and builder is God." TM

Gerald Shenk directs the activities of Abraham's Tent, a center for interfaith engagement at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He plans to move to Elkhart, Ind., this summer.

The ultimate questions of our lives do not turn finally on whether we move away or stay in place but around the hope we have in God's journey.

Ceaseless generosity

J. Alden Tyson attends Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

While graduation day 2009 seemed like any other—the sense of accomplishment and bands of proud friends and family—it wasn't. The world of today is strikingly different from that of even a year earlier. Graduation 2009 took place in the shadow of a global economy gone awry.

Every graduate repeatedly heard the same comforting words, words spoken with a scent of fleeting conviction. "You will find a job. You will be fine. The economy will get turned around." These undoubtedly well-intentioned words raise the dilemma that my classmates now invite you to dwell within, beside us.

Most of us spent considerable time living in other cultures in foreign lands. Each of us carries a face or two of the global dispossessed tucked in our memory. Whether that face assumes the identity of a Palestinian man working 45 hours per week for the equivalent of $20 or a Guatemalan teenager whose future is likely a black hole of sickness and poverty, we have seen suffering faces and the traces of injustice that mark their path of distress.

> Make this time of economic uncertainty an opportunity to witness to God's ceaseless generosity.

In many cases, we witnessed the intertwined economic and military policies of our nation at work. Such cases left us distraught. An example from my own experience could be when I first walked up to the "separation barrier," which makes Israelis and Palestinians no longer neighbors but invisible others, and noticed an emblem reading "Made in the U.S.A." These experiences lead me to be skeptical when considering whether or not I want our economy resurrected.

Economics, under the guise of capitalism, according to the textbooks, is the science that studies the allocation of scarce resources. The assumption is that the created world is one inherently lacking the resources necessary for the equal well-being of its creatures. Thus the doctrine of a scarce world is to capitalism as the book of Genesis is to the Bible. Insofar as capitalism declares that the world was born not with plenitude but with innate scarcity and despair, it lays the foundation for the competition and violence that accompany its global crusade.

Yet peering deeper into the fabric of capitalist economics, we see something even more perilous at work. Capitalism's creation theology inherently risks eliminating the act of gift-giving. In a scarce world, letting go of your possessions means sacrificing your security. Who among us is willing to do such a thing?

Likely it won't be the recent American college graduate. The Gospels remind us that "the least of these," those with seemingly no possessions, are those most likely to provide hospitality and healing. The very act of gift-giving draws into question our preconceived notions of poverty and wealth.

My Palestinian friends, who welcomed me into their home, gave me a seat at their table and a place to lay my head, did so in a way that renarrated the world as one created by God in plenitude and abundance. As they let go of the few resources they owned to sustain me, I caught a glimpse of the power of what an economy predicated on gift-giving could look like.

It is a reflection on my theological haphazardness that I was surprised by this. Only a few miles from that place, across a giant wall, and up and down a couple of hills lay the ground that held the cross of Christ's bearing, the gift open to all. The cross, as the forever witness of the Trinitarian gift economy, provides our only basis for an economy of gift-giving. We need nothing else; nothing is left to be seen. The gift of the cross is what John Howard Yoder elegantly named "the grain of the universe."

A fellow classmate of mine remarked in the Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.) campus newspaper that we should not desire a return to our nation's "normal" economic policies of expansionism and excess. Instead, what we truly need is to forge new norms. We shouldn't desire to see our economy turned around; we should desire a whole new economy.

As we dwell between excess and poverty, let us remember that in a cross-driven gift economy nothing is mine that also is not yours. Make this time of economic uncertainty an opportunity to witness to God's ceaseless generosity, remembering to anticipate being surprised by the unlikely gifts you may receive along the way. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

A nurse describes her two weeks in Haiti

Haitians will teach others what it means to have joy in adversity, she says.

Evening was falling on Haiti as our two vehicles, loaded high with our 12-member relief team from Virginia Mennonite Missions, attempted the steep rocky ascent of the crumbling road toward our next work site.

This was week two of our mobile relief clinic and exactly two weeks since the first earthquake that toppled Port-Au-Prince and sent its citizens to the streets—the streets where most remain, with no more than a sheet and a stick for shelter.

We parked the truck and began the ascent past crumbled houses and street fires, stopping to hear an elderly woman weep and gesticulate to the skies, her cloudy eyes rich with pain as she reached out and proclaimed that she is "under the arm of the grand master."

A white dove led the way past twisted rubble as we "blancs" (whites) followed the pastor, who was leading us into his own devastated community. We crested the hill, and he reminded us to wear masks if we had brought any.

Two weeks since the quake, yet many bodies remained under hopelessly crushed structures, their scent a painful reminder to the families who mourned them.

No vehicles could pass through this area. Demolition will continue one neighborhood block at a time—one cinder block, one board, one red-and-blue high chair compressed to the floor with a small plush reindeer lying next to it. Beyond the crumbled homes and offices was another vast hillside, a slumping array of flattened dwellings and leaning structures, pockmarked with eroded sites of homes that slid to crush what lay below. Power lines drooped, waving their dark flags of black plastic bags, soot and other materials that clung to them like sea kelp.

The pastor wept as he showed us where his office once stood, across from the spot where his church once stood. A parishoner's wife lay buried beneath this ground. The woman's young daughter—eyes red from dust and sorrow—sat quietly by, her arm in a makeshift sling.

An odd thing happened as we stood together weeping. A rainbow cut through the haze and reached heavenward. Its arm curved to embrace the hillside, much like the "arm of the grand master" that covered the elderly woman who cried out to us in the street.

Joe prayed with the community's pastor. They prayed for each other loudly as we circled around to lay on hands. Fires burned in the street, fires that burn trash and cremate bodies. We kept praying.

The next day included mobile clinic work in tent cities. We saw more wounds, more fractures, more sick babies. We saw patients who still had not seen a doctor since the day of the quake. We treated them if we could. Those too badly injured were transported to the Miami University tent hospital near the Port-Au-Prince airport. They will be treated there or flown to the *USS Comfort* for surgery.

Anje Ackerman Cassel

A Haitian boy with a head wound plays outside a tent city.

We saw a young girl with a fractured femur, a grown woman with a crushed pelvis, a boy whose hand had to be operated on before gangrene dictated amputation. Meanwhile, as we returned to our truck in the dusk, a shy girl reached for my hand and flashed a bashful grin. I thought of my own young children back in America, and I nearly fell to my knees to mourn this girl's loss of innocence.

As we wove through the makeshift tents, I passed a hand-painted message, "God is good all the time." I pulled myself together and we continued. In the morning we returned to provide medical care—but my hope was to provide more than just that.

I prayed that we have the time to listen to a story as a patient waited in line, to give them a chance to tell their stories of loss and redemption in the midst of suffering. I knew already that these good, strong, suffering people would teach all of us what it means to have joy in adversity.—*Anje Ackerman Cassel returned from Haiti on Feb. 5 after two weeks volunteering with a Virginia Mennonite Missions medical relief team in conjunction with MCC in Port-au-Prince. Anje is an ER nurse in Virginia.*

In collaboration with Mennonite Central Committee, Virginia Mennonite Missions organized and sent three emergency medical teams to Haiti.

Bishop honored for 27 years of leadership

Helped found an African-Initiated Church; retires from official duties

After 27 years of serving Bethany Bible School, Thompson Mpongwana Adonis has retired from official duties. He is a founder of one of the African-Initiated Churches (AIC) in South Africa and respectfully known as Bishop Adonis.

In 1982, he and other AIC leaders met with the Transkei Council of Churches, a branch of the South Africa Council of Churches, to discuss the feeling of disrespect they sensed from mainline congregations. The leaders decided during that meeting that part of the problem was their own lack of training for ministry roles. To remedy this, they began an interdenominational AIC training program—which came to be known as Bethany Bible School (BBS).

"[Bishop Adonis's] desire for the development of the AICs was clearly foremost in his heart," Gary and Jean Isaac write. The Isaacs served in South Africa from 1986 to 1999. "We were constantly amazed at how he was willing to travel anywhere and everywhere to bring people together, both within the AIC movement itself and between AICs and the mainline churches."

The first teacher at the school was Jim Egli, a Mennonite mission worker in neighboring Lesotho, who came periodically to teach courses. The AICs chose to work with Mennonites because they recognized them as a denomination that wasn't seeking to augment their own numbers but was genuinely interested in helping people grow in their knowledge of Jesus. Additionally, Mennonites in Transkei had gained credibility through their anti-apartheid stance and their rural development work.

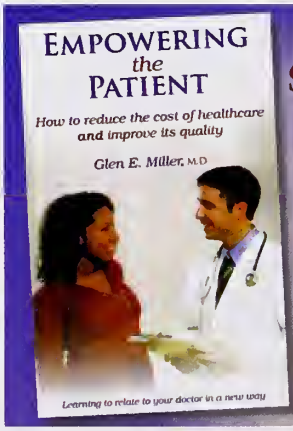
In 1984, the first full-time Mennonite teacher was hired. Since then, various North American Mennonite teachers have come and gone, but Bishop Adonis has given continuous leadership, promoting the school in the area and serving as chairperson.

"[Bishop Adonis] was our guide to many locations and through difficult issues," write Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen, who followed the Isaacs in 1999. "His integrity, wisdom and gentle leadership opened many doors for us."

On Dec. 10, 2009, a group of Bishop Adonis' friends and committee members gathered to honor his retirement. "Mama" Mavis Tshandu referred to him as "our father" and said that his legacy will continue at BBS. She expressed her desire to build a building for BBS in honor of him.—*Melanie Hess for Mennonite Mission Network. Anna Sawatzky contributed to this story.*

Anna Sawatzky

Thompson Mpongwana Adon (left), known as Bishop Adonis, receives a certificate of appreciation from Mennonite Mission Network worker Joe Sawatzky.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Board considers conflict needs

Also approves Elkhart, Ind., building campaign

Last summer, the delegates at Convention 2009 directed the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board to ask conferences what resources they need to address conflict around Mennonite Church USA's human sexuality statements.

Executive Board members discussed the results of that research at meetings Feb. 18-20 at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va..

While the EB members continue to process this feedback from conferences, they have drafted a letter to Constituency Leaders Council asking for its consideration and feedback on resources and ways to address the conflict.

EB board member Janeen Bertsche Johnson presented an extensive compilation of responses from conferences. This is the first time this kind of research has been conducted.

"We need to keep all these voices in front of us," Bertsche Johnson said.

Several EB members mentioned the need to clarify Mennonite Church USA polity, which says, "Area conferences are the body ... that determines [congregational] membership, and the Executive Board's role is to lead the church in living out its missional future. It works at this by aligning all parts of the church to support the area conferences as they work with congregations."

Board members Tina Begay of Native Mennonite Ministries and Juanita Nuñez of Iglesia Menonita Hispana said that inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people not a major issue for the underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Kim Vu Friesen, board member, agreed and added that many young adult voices call for inclusion.

Terry Shue said the delegate's resolution addresses conflict in general, not simply the conflict surrounding inclusion of LGBT people.

Prior to this discussion, David Brubaker of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., presented his findings on church conflict to the board. His research found that the degree of contention in a denomination and the relatively recent ordination of women predicts a higher intensity of conflict. He also believes that the more hierarchical the church organization the more significant the conflict. Brubaker made the following suggestions: Strengthen the center; clarify where authority lies and avoid power struggles; develop healthy dialogue processes. Brubaker also said no one should be forced to participate in dialogue.

"When the center doesn't hold," Brubaker said, "you end up with a Northern Ireland."

Building project: After a conference call on Feb. 20, the EB, the boards of Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Education Agency passed a motion to approve the "Joining Together, Investing in Hope" capital campaign for the Mennonite Church USA office facility in Elkhart, Ind. The vote approved a plan to leave one level of the south wing unfinished and authorized a loan of up to $1.5 million. According to moderator-elect Dick Thomas, building decisions may change depending on additional campaign gifts received in the coming year.

David Weaver, project management team chair, said that this building project will not be a future impediment to staff in dispersed locations. He also said a desire to tithe to the global church came from individuals at the beginning of the campaign, so the team contributed $150,000 to Mennonite World Conference's Global Mission Fellowship and $300,000 to Executive Board programs.—*Anna Groff*

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A crowd of over 1,000 people attended the "Festival of Roots and Music" at Strasburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Jeremy Hess

Festival celebrates 300 years in Lancaster

Over 1,000 pack Strasburg Mennonite for anniversary of European settlement.

More than 1,000 people packed Strasburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Jan. 31 in celebration of the 300th anniversary of European settlement in Lancaster County. The event, called Lancaster 300: a Festival of Roots and Music, was sponsored by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and cosponsored by the Parish Resource Center of Lancaster and the Lancaster Council of Churches. The festival served as the kickoff to a year of events celebrating the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the first permanent European settlers—a group of Swiss-German Mennonite families—to Lancaster County.

Merle Good, who serves on the board of the Mennonite Historical Society and chaired the festival steering committee, named three main reasons for the event: to celebrate the original families that came in 1710, to recognize the contributions of Native Americans both before and after 1710 and to celebrate the cultural diversity of Lancaster County today.

The organizers chose to hold the festival at Strasburg Mennonite because of its historical connections. The meetinghouse sits on part of the original plot deeded by William Penn to the original group of Mennonite families. Lancaster County served as the main entry point to the United States for Swiss-German Mennonites for 150 years.

The program included a diverse mix of music, with historical moments of speaking throughout. Daryle "Soaring Hawk" Diedrich represented the Native American perspective, and Luis Torres, born and raised in Lancaster County, spoke about the Puerto Rican experience. Other speakers included Monsignor Thomas Smith from St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Lancaster, Father Alexander Veronis from the Greek Orthodox community, Ted Darcus, representing an African-American perspective, and Suk Shuglie, a Korean immigrant.

The music included a Latino worship team, a Vietnamese choir from a local Vietnamese Alliance Church, the choir from Ephrata Cloister, bagpiper Tom Miller, an Old Order River Brethren group and soloists Amy Yovanovitch and Jeryl Metzler.—*Melanie Hess*

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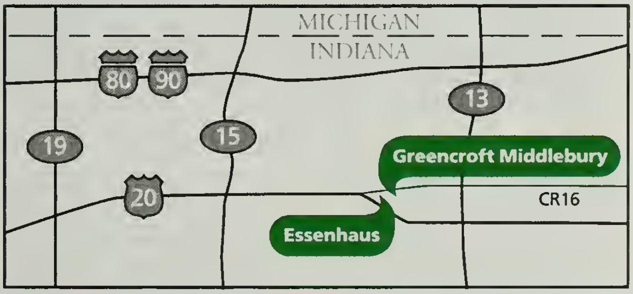

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What it takes to be an 'environmental wacko'

Radcliff says standards for creation care set too low

David Radcliff says he does not drive a car or eat certain things but says his practices are not extreme. However, people label him an "environmental wacko" for efforts like asking to reuse a plastic cup while flying.

"It doesn't take much to get you pigeonholed," he said Feb. 12 to a group of 40 people gathered to discuss environmental issues and faith.

The bar is set so low that people think recycling is the best they can do, he said.

Radcliff, director of the New Community Project, presented the keynote address for the conference "Creation Care: Stewards of the Earth," which was held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Church of the Brethren (COB), Laurelville and Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) sponsored the gathering.

Radcliff, from the COB, shared photos and stories from the learning tours he leads to the Amazon, Arctic and other places.

He believes the people in these settings can teach us about creation care.

Upon witnessing the effects of climate change and oil drilling on these areas, he said it begs the question, Is anything sacred to our society?

Radcliff ended his talk by saying he finds hope in the mustard seed parable, as he believes God can multiply small works.

Luke Gascho of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen (Ind.) College presented the Feb. 13 morning address on creation care and stewardship.

After describing the environmental boundaries humans overstep, he challenged the group by asking if Christians are to blame for the ecological crisis—attributing much to Western Protestantism.

"Dominion does not mean domination," he said.

Gascho said all Scripture came before the industrial age. "Do we know how to read it?" he asked. "Our relationship with all of creation, not just people, needs to be regenerative," he said.

Chris Meyer of MMA and Carol Bowman of the COB led workshops in addition to Radcliff and Gascho.—*Anna Groff*

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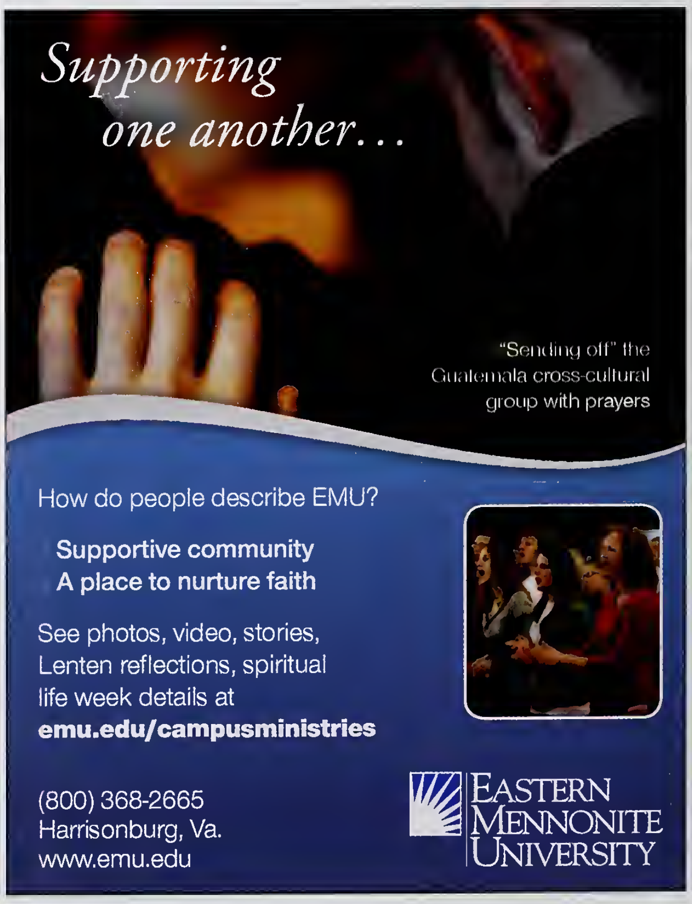

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EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

MDS trailer stolen Jan. 5, worth over $10,000

$3,500 worth of tools replaced when community steps up with generous offers

When community generosity overshadows the unpleasantness of theft, there is reason to celebrate. When Bert Hamm, Mennonite Disaster Service project director, returned to the MDS campsite located at the vacant Ramona Community School in San Diego County, Calif., on Jan. 5, he noticed the absence of the MDS tool trailer.

Storm Aid, an Amish group composed of MDS volunteers in Lancaster, Pa., donated the 6-by-12-foot trailer. The tools and trailer are estimated to be worth "well over $10,000," says Hamm.

Local law enforcement officers believe the tool trailer, holding a majority of MDS tools needed to rebuild houses, disappeared around Dec. 12 or 13, 2009. The San Diego County sheriff's department is asking locals to help recover the trailer.

However, the seemingly big setback turned out to be a minor interruption for MDS volunteers.

MDS director of communications Scott Sundberg, says, "Knowing our volunteers, I wonder if it even slowed them down much. Thankfully, though, people and churches are stepping up to help so that our volunteers have what they need to make a difference."

Familiar with the work of MDS, pastors of Grace Community Church, located near the MDS campsite, heard the news and "wanted to do something to help," Hamm says.

They took two special offerings to help offset the costs MDS incurred in lost material. The church collected $2,225 and gave it as a gift to MDS.

Local stores have also started donating tools. "We are grateful for the support received from the community," says Hamm. "The community is more aware of us being here and the work we are doing."

Since the incident, Hamm slowly purchased new tools. So far, approximately $3,500 worth of tools have been replaced.

The incident created new MDS partnerships and awareness of the ministry of MDS, and it raised community awareness of displaced neighbors.—*Brian Pipkin of Mennonite Disaster Service*

RESOURCES

Hunger and Happiness: Feeding the Hungry, Nourishing Our Souls by L. Shannon Jung (Augsburg Books, 2009, $15.99) exposes the atrocities of a global food system whereby the affluent "feed" at the expense of others. It explores how complicity in the hunger of others contributes to the "spiritual malnourishment" of the well-fed.

A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor by Miroslav Volf, Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal and Melissa Yarrington (Eerdmans, 2010, $14) includes an open letter from 2007 that Muslim leaders issued to Christian leaders inviting cooperation as a step toward peace. That letter and a collaborative Christian response appear in this book. Building on those documents, this book also includes subsequent commentary and dialogue between Muslim and Christian scholars and represents a move toward harmony between two world religions so often seen to be at odds.

The New Yoder, edited by Peter Dula and Chris K. Huebner (Cascade Books, 2010, $39), collects 15 essays from a new generation of scholars, including J. Alexander Sider, Alain Epp Weaver, Gerald W. Schlabach and Joseph R. Wiebe, who interact with the work of Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder.

To Hear the Word by John Howard Yoder (Cascade Books, 2010, $29) is a new edition of Yoder's work on biblical interpretation and theology. This corrected edition includes a foreword by Michael J. Gorman, three new chapters and an appendix.

As Resident Aliens: Christian Peacemaker Teams in the West Bank, 1995-2005 by Kathleen Kern (Cascade Books, 2010, $41) charts the growth of CPT in Palestine, how it adapted to changing political conditions, spread to locations outside Hebron and developed networks with activists throughout Palestine and Israel.

Before and After by Carrie Newcomer (Audio CD, 2010, $14.98) is a multilayered work that invites the listener to slow down and reflect on the experiences that have changed and shaped our lives. Order from www.rounder.com.

The Nature of Grief: Photographs and Words for Reflection and Healing by Rebecca S. Hauder ($14.99) presents inspiring nature photographs she has taken, fitting quotes and helpful suggestions for healing after loss. Order from www.resourcesforgrief.com.

Survey: more women in leadership but still not enough

Women leaders at the Mennonite Women USA strategic planning retreat in March 2009 observed that currently there are fewer women in leadership in some parts of Mennonite Church USA than in previous years. Furthermore, those gathered called for Mennonite Women USA to speak up for increasing the numbers of women in leadership across the denomination. In response, Ron Byler, then assistant executive director of Mennonite Church USA, called for the creation of the Women in Leadership Audit. Initial research entailed inquiries to the agencies of Mennonite Church USA;

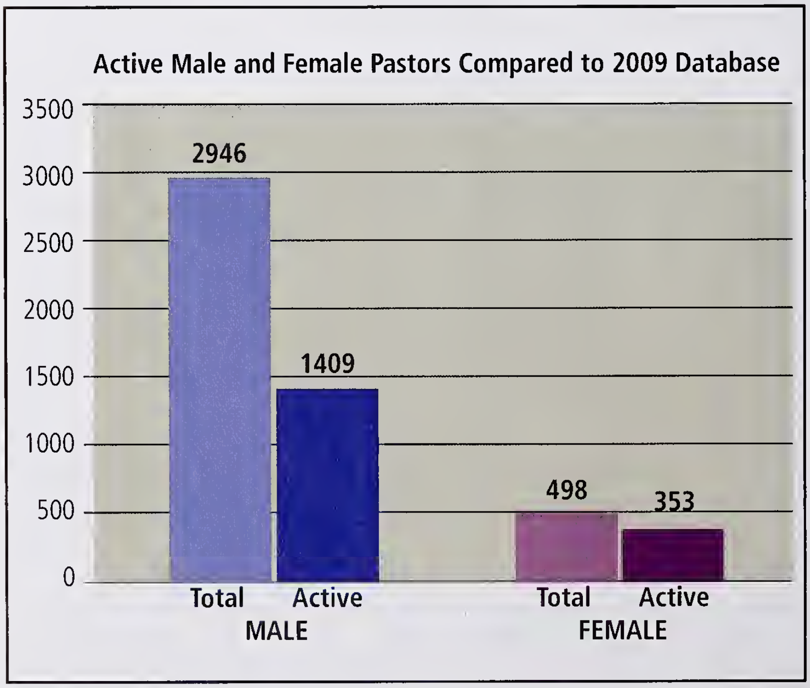
- Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Publishing Network, Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA),
- Mennonite Church USA denominational leadership,
- Mennonite Central Committee,
- Mennonite Disaster Service,
- MHS Alliance,
- Mennonite Economic Development Association (MEDA).

We asked for records of women in leadership positions since the early 1980s. Specifically, we asked for the following:

- the numbers of women on boards of directors as well as in organizational and congregational leadership as executive directors,
- presidents and vice presidents,
- lead pastors,
- moderators and board chairs.

The goal was to track the trends since the 1980s to see if indeed there are fewer numbers of women in leadership now than in previous years.

What the findings reveal is a complex picture of change. In most cases, the data shows consistent increases of women on many of the boards of directors. For instance, since the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church in 2002, the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA has maintained near even numbers of women and men—an encouraging shift from the larger disparities premerger (see graph on page 48). At the same time, it is important to note that underrepresented racial/ethnic women are often required to fill two roles on committees and boards: as racial/ethnic people and as women. This is the case on the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA, which currently has no representation from racial/ethnic men.



In congregational leadership, there also have been increases in the number of women in full-time ministry. According to research compiled by Dorothy Nickel Friesen in May 2009, there are also positive changes in attitudes toward women in pastoral ministry. At the same time, there is still a large disparity between the number of women in active ministry and the number of men (see graph below).

Although the number of women has increased on boards of directors, there has not been a similar increase in the organizational leadership positions of directors and presidents.

Currently the Governance Council of Mennonite Church USA, made up of the executive director, director of churchwide operations, agency directors, agency board chairpersons, the moderator and moderator elect, has 10 men and one woman (see page 48). This is a sobering reality when coupled with the fact that we have had neither a female executive director nor a churchwide agency CEO in Mennonite Church USA or prior to the merger.

Why is this the case then, given the ability women now have to seek any leadership position in the church, congregationally or organizationally? Why has it also been the case that women have declined to accept, as often as men, certain high-level leadership positions, for example, that of the Mennonite Church USA moderator?

In the fall of 2009, Marty Lehman, director of churchwide operations, presented the preliminary findings of the audit to both the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA and the Constituency Leadership Council. In both instances, Lehman said that women had been asked to consider denominational leadership positions but had decided against pursuing them in some cases. Therefore, the question was raised, "Why do women say no?"

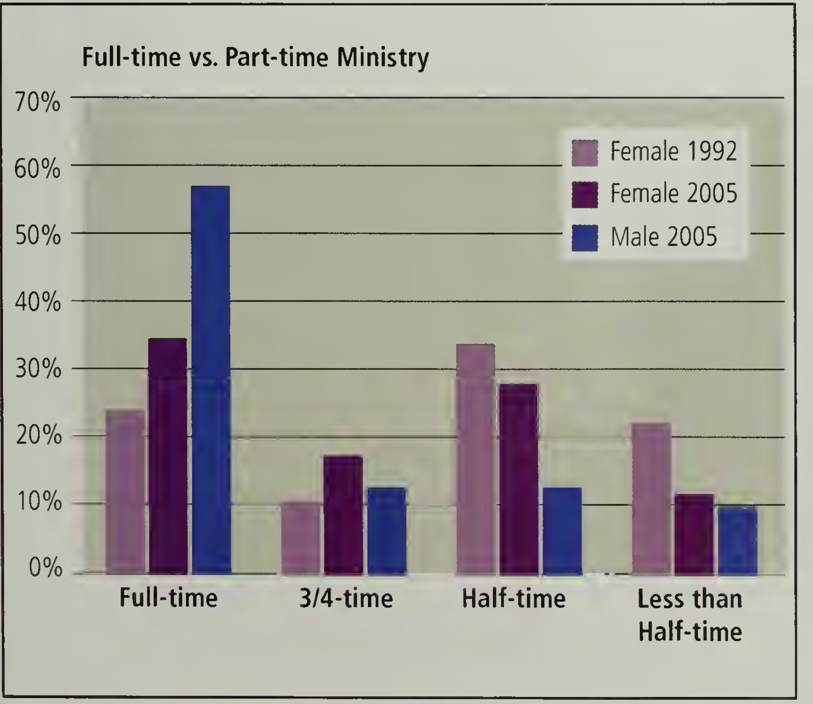
In order to answer this question and continue research into the audit data, a steering committee of women was formed. These women, all located in northern Indiana to allow for face-to-face interaction, have met twice to discuss the findings of the audit and prepare a report with recommendations for the denomination. The eight women involved are Regina Shands Stoltzfus, Yvonne Diaz, Patty Burdette, Anita Yoder Kehr, Jane Stoltzfus Buller, Hilary Scarsella, Joanna Shenk and Marty Lehman.

In January, members of the committee interviewed women who declined leadership positions in order to find out why they said no. Although a handful of interviews does not account for every perspective, certain themes were consistent and point to systemic issues within our denomination.

Still pioneers: One interviewee talked about women still being pioneers when they take on leadership positions, noting it is an experience that men will never have. Such work requires continual groundbreaking and is a "constant translation project between alternate universes." Women also know that some people will still be opposed to their leadership, which only adds to the loneliness of leadership positions.

Too heavy: A few women said that top-level leadership roles are too administratively heavy, perpetuating a management model rather than a relationally transformative model. Hence, although Mennonite Church USA theoretically values the grassroots when it comes to decision-making, those in top-level positions are still expected to be the gatekeepers and chief decision-makers.

Another woman shared that the responsibilities at her job were too demanding and therefore she was not able to request the leave-time required of the moderator position. For her the question was, "Can I take on the role of moderator and still be available to my institution?" The answer was no, at this point, in her case. But she said the answer would have been different four years ago and will probably be different in the future.



Need larger pool: All the women interviewed emphasized the need for a larger pool of women from which to draw for leadership positions. Otherwise, a few women noted, there is increased pressure on a small group of women who are accepted as leaders in our denomination to take on any leadership role they are asked to fill. This can feel disrespectful because it does not take into account their leadership styles but instead expects them to fit a certain leadership mold. In the end, this model of leadership is limiting for everyone.

Some people will still be opposed to [women's] leadership, which only adds to the loneliness of leadership positions.—Joanna Shenk

Along these lines, there was also consensus that increased mentoring opportunities for young women, particularly in organizational roles, is necessary.

"Due to generational shifts," one woman says, "organizations will need to restructure in a few years. So we need to discern what we let go of and what we retain. We're in an adaptive time. There is much change happening, and what worked in the past will not necessarily work in the future."

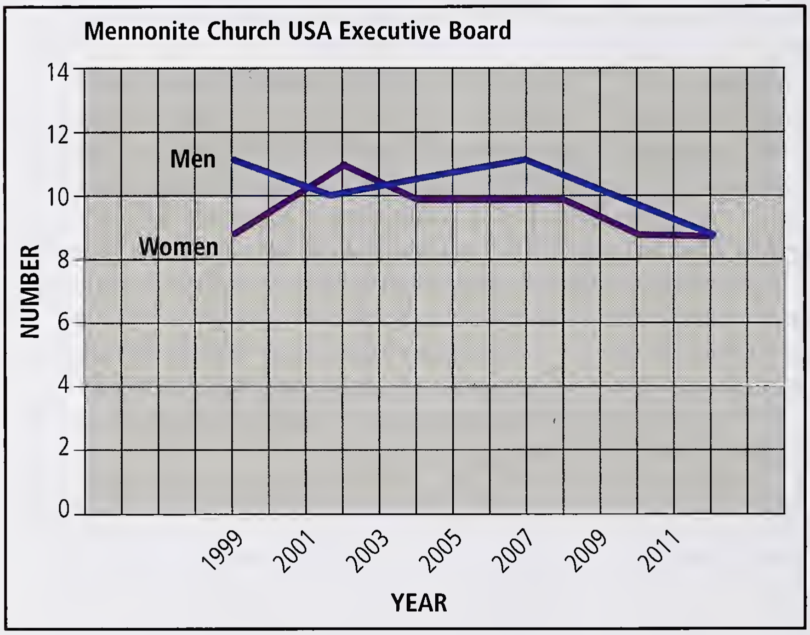
The following questions and others will be addressed in the forthcoming report from the Women in Leadership Audit steering committee:

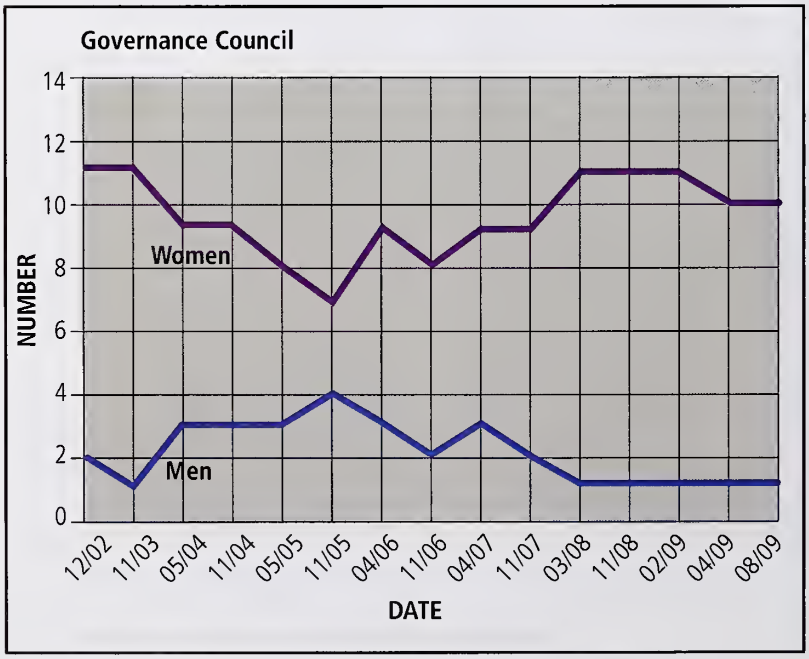
1. In analyzing the past, is it fair to say that leadership positions have favored white, male leadership styles and therefore kept women and others from accepting them? Or must we delve deeper and question the cultural conditioning that values certain types of leadership over others?

2. What do our leadership positions say about our values as Mennonite Church USA? As one woman put it, have we settled for "management" instead of "relational transformation"? Are there ways we can better hold together both analytical and intuitive modes of leadership, recognizing that we are systemically imbalanced toward a patriarchal model of efficiency and conformity?

3. What does a new generation of leaders, both female and male, have to offer?

In keeping with the legacy of courageous women leaders in the Mennonite Church, such as Clara Eby Steiner, founder of the Mennonite Women's Missionary Society (see article at right), this audit seeks to cast a vision for the healthy partnership of women and men leaders. What began as a question of numbers has become an opportunity for Mennonite Church USA to engage in important systemic questions about leadership. At root, both women and men are diminished when patriarchy, the prevailing pattern, is present and unnamed. Therefore, may we continue to grow together as a denomination that values the contributions of all, while we seek our own healing and the healing of our world.—*Joanna Shenk for Mennonite Church USA*





The story of Clara Eby Steiner and her mission work banned by (old) Mennonite Church

Clara Eby Steiner was in her late 30s when she lost both her husband of 17 years and her role with the church. As a mother and active partner with her husband, Menno Simon Steiner, chairman of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, in the early 1900s, she contributed significantly to the (old) Mennonite Church. In 1915, following the death of her husband, she wrote to Daniel Kauffman, then editor of *Gospel Herald,* who had noted her previous work with the church.

"You touched a sensitive chord in my experience when you refer to my having at one time been closely associated with the active church life," she wrote. "To be called upon to give it all up before I had reached 40 … and while at the same time calls were constantly going out for more laborers, was crucifying, to say the least."

According to Elaine Sommers Rich in her book *Mennonite Women: A Story of God's Faithfulness, 1683-1983,* "The church had accepted her working behind the scenes through her husband but would not accept her doing the same work on her own."

Despite resistance from certain corners of the church, Clara founded the Mennonite Women's Missionary Society, which united women across the Mennonite Church. It raised nearly $21,000 and sent 32 tons of garments overseas in the year 1921 alone. The success of the society was not formally recognized by the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and by 1926 the board mandated that the society cease all missionary sponsorship. In 1929, the board clarified its reasoning:

"The church has not looked with favor on such a movement, not that it was not interested in women's work but because it was feared that the organization of such a society would have a divisive influence. We can see a reason why there should be a women's sewing circle organization, for this is distinctly woman's work. With a separate missionary society, it is different."—*Joanna Shenk for Mennonite Church USA*

Photo provided

Mennonite artist creates icons

Jerry Holsopple studies iconography on sabbatical

Photo provided

Jerry Holsopple works on his icon of Saint Maximilian of Tebessa. Michael the Archangel waits for shading and highlighting.

Jerry Holsopple, a professor and photographer, decided to take a stab at a completely new medium this year: icon painting.

Holsopple, who teaches at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., chose to spend his sabbatical in Lithuania, teaching at LCC International University through a Fulbright scholarship. In addition to teaching, he took on the role of student under a Russian Orthodox priest, Vladimir Artamonov, who agreed to teach Jerry iconography.

Photography and videography hold few if any common elements with iconography, Holsopple said in an interview on Feb. 1. Still, he wanted to experience this new art form as a Mennonite artist. His interest in iconography began in the mid-1990s. During a video production trip about a peacemaking camp he visited several churches and a large icon museum in Sophia. He talked with some painters and purchased two icons from one of them to bring home. Since then he often considered how our thoughts tie to visuals. "What does that mean for Mennonites who are so unvisual?" he asked.

Holsopple said Mennonites have few visuals, and those we do have we are not sure what to do with. *Martyr's Mirror* holds the most powerful visuals but are unfamiliar to many.

He cited two differences between the Eastern and Western approaches to art: First, the Western church took a more text-oriented approach, whereas the Eastern Church embraces a long history with visuals. Second, iconography in the Eastern Church only allows for small interpretations, as artists must work within the traditions or guidelines. In the West, artists attempt to "do their own thing" by creating new visuals and carrying out new ideas.

Now Holsopple works to "find the voice within the tradition" throughout the long process of iconography. The traditions, or guidelines, in iconography include colors used, positions of characters and features of characters. All characters either face forward or sideways with eyes open. Also, icons lack shadows, illustrating their spirituality instead of physicality.

For his first icon, Holsopple chose Michael the Archangel. For his second, he chose Saint Maximilian of Tebessa, a martyr for not joining the military. Holsopple said iconographers pray and fast in congruence with their work, so he now focuses on icons while praying and testifies to increased concentration. He said these types of practices could influence his artistic process in the future. Before he returns home with his icons, the priest will bless them—the final step in the process.

"When you bless the icons, it makes up for your lack of skill," Holsopple said Priest Artamonov told him.—*Anna Groff*

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Brenneman calls for new 'school of thought'

Wants Goshen College to be a place of radical assent as well as radical dissent

In a Jan. 15 convocation at Goshen (Ind.) College, president Jim Brenneman called for a shift in the school's traditional "culture of dissent" and honored president emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder.

The time for "yes" is here, says Goshen (Ind.) College president Jim Brenneman, who believes it is a new day at the school. In his Jan. 15 chapel sermon, "Getting to Yes and Amen! The New GC 'School of Thought'"—based on 2 Corinthians 1:20-22—Brenneman juxtaposed the college's historic culture of dissent with a culture of assent and affirmed that both are needed. The president gave much credit to President Emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder, who attended and was recognized during the service (see page 51).

"From 1924," Brenneman said, "by my reckoning 30 years into the history of Goshen College until at least 1989, the normative 'school of thought' at Goshen was that of the radical dissent, nonconforming idealism and prophetic disestablishmentarianism. There were more no's than yeses."

"Saying no a lot isn't necessarily a bad thing," he added.

Brenneman pointed to the earliest Anabaptists as the inspiration for dissent.

"We came to such an ethos quite honestly," he said. "They said no to the fundamental religious and civil order of the time. They rejected the church-state union, which had dominated Christianity for some 1,000 years. They championed human freedom and the separation of church and state, and they were persecuted and executed for beliefs that have since been enshrined in all Western democracies.

"These early Mennonites/Anabaptists were also 'idealists' and 'perfectionists' for whom the word compromise was considered sinful," Brenneman said. "Unfortunately, because so many of them were silenced and killed during those early years, they never really had the opportunity to try to put into practice a social or political model of how their beliefs might actually have played out in the world of nations and cultures where compromise can be seen as a positive norm."

This understanding, Brenneman said, led to being on the side of prophets rather than political leaders, on the side of protesters rather than the establishment, on the side of the individual rather than institutions. But as an Old Testament scholar, he said that understanding doesn't include the full view of the biblical prophet.

"Clearly, they came down on the side of the prophetic dissenter," Brenneman said, "largely based on a somewhat narrow understanding of biblical prophets as primarily naysayers and exclusively critical."

Manifestations of Goshen College's "culture of dissent" include the publications of *The Anabaptist Vision* by Goshen College dean H.S. Bender. It called for true Christians to "withdraw from the worldly system and create a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church." As well, Goshen College Professor Emeritus of History Guy F. Hershberger authored the book *War, Peace and Nonresistance*.

In contrast, Brenneman told the story of philosopher J. Lawrence Burkholder, who called for Mennonites to get involved in public policy decisions. Brenneman concluded by calling for a new day at the college, one in which both schools of thought have a home.

"We need both," he said. "To side with one to the exclusion of the other is to settle for half-truths. ... At this time in Goshen's history, we need a lot more radical yea-sayers. We need to create a culture of assent alongside our historic culture of dissent."—*Jodi H. Beyeler*

Goshen College to play national anthem

Goshen (Ind.) College announced on Jan. 22 it will play an instrumental version of the "Star-Spangled Banner" before select sports events on campus, followed by prayer. This decision takes effect in March and was made after discussion and deliberation over the past year. Providing a more hospitable atmosphere for athletic events was a primary reason for the recommendation and ultimately for the decision. Mennonite Church USA does not have an official position on the playing of the national anthem; there are varying practices among the other Mennonite colleges and universities.—*Goshen College*

Burkholder's dissertation 'all but banned'

Former Goshen College president recounts disagreement with church leaders

As a young adult, J. Lawrence Burkholder flew C-47 cargo planes in China during the Marxist revolution of the late 1940s. As an adult, he marched for racial justice alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He was in East Germany when the Berlin Wall fell. Burkholder inserted himself into such difficult situations because he believes Anabaptists have a responsibility to make the world a more peaceful place.

But when he wrote his dissertation in 1958 and called for Mennonites to get involved in public policy, Burkholder says his call was ignored by (old) Mennonite Church leaders. Current Goshen (Ind.) College president Jim Brenneman revisited the controversy in a Jan. 15 convocation at the college (see page 50).

Burkholder's dissertation received summa cum laude honors at Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary but was placed on a shelf in the Goshen College library. It remained unpublished, even during Burkholder's tenure as Goshen's president from 1971 to 1984.

"It was all but banned," Brenneman said, "literally going underground for 30 years, staying unpublished until 1989, five years *after* President Burkholder completed his own tenure here at Goshen College."

"Guy Hershberger read my thesis and respectfully said, 'It's brilliant,'" Burkholder says. But, according to Burkholder, Hershberger also wrote criticisms on many pages.

"I erased them, and I'm so sorry I did that," Burkholder says. "But I didn't want people to go in there and read his criticism and not read my thesis."

Burkholder's primary argument with the Mennonite leaders of the 1950s centered around a movement toward living in Mennonite communities.

"H.S. Bender, Guy Hershberger and Orie Miller were convinced that if you had the will and knowledge of discipleship you would be able to enter into community and be saved from the world," Burkholder says. "I gave up on perfection, even though the *idea* of perfection is something we have to live with."

Burkholder argued that Mennonites should enter into civil discourse and even participate in public policy decisions.

"It was ... Burkholder's thesis that called for all Christians, Mennonites and others ... to become engaged in the civil, business, political and institutional establishments of the world," Brenneman said.

But according to Brenneman, this call arrived in a college culture that preferred to engage the world only as naysayers.

"The normative school of thought at Goshen was that of radical dissent, nonconforming idealism and prophetic disestablishmentarianism," said Brenneman, citing H.S. Bender's call for all Christians to "withdraw from the worldly system and create a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church."

Today, at 92, Burkholder sees Mennonites doing exactly what he envisioned more than half a century ago.

Everett Thomas

In a Jan. 15 convocation, Goshen (Ind.) College president emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder was honored for his dissertation written in 1958 but not published until 1989. To the left is his daughter Myrna Burkholder. On the right is Jim Caskey, the college's vice president for institutional advancement.

> If you go into the world and take some responsibility for it, you'll pick up some dirt.
> —J. Lawrence Burkholder

"Responsibility comes when we are accountable to someone outside ourselves, especially in politics," Burkholder says. "I knew if you go into the world and take some responsibility for it, you'll pick up some dirt."

For J. Lawrence Burkholder, taking responsibility for making the world a better place is more important than striving for perfection in a Mennonite community.

The Limits of Perfection, a popularized version of Burkholder's dissertation, was published in 1993 by the Institute for Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies and Pandora Press.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Pastors let the Bible 'read them' at AMBS

Participants asked to fast before Communion during first worship service.

Mary E. Klassen

Praying during Pastors Week are Bock Ki Kim, Todd Friesen, Mindy Smith and Eileen Saner.

Coming to the biblical text hungry is one way Mary H. Schertz described the kind of Bible study modeled at Pastors Week, Jan. 25-28, in Elkhart, Ind. Schertz is a professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

On Jan. 24, planners asked the 150 participants to fast until they received Communion in the late morning worship service. Schertz and Rachel Miller Jacobs, former pastor and currently a doctoral student, led the group in what they called "reading the Bible confessionally" and "reading the Bible contemplatively."

Schertz also described it as "reading the Bible as if our lives depended on it." Each day, a text from Luke became the focus of a three-part movement.

First, one of the two leaders read the text from a fresh translation. Then the leaders invited the group to "let the text read us" by taking ample time for participants to reflect on how the Scripture speaks to them in their ministry and how their contexts speak to the text. The final movement included adoration and worship focused by the text.

This way of reading the Bible grew out of what Schertz called a "sense that somewhere underneath our well-nourished exteriors, our busy and successful lives, our abundance of achievements and success, there are some ways in which we are still starving. Many of us seem hungry, some desperately hungry for something more."

Both Schertz and Jacobs cautioned that this approach to reading the Bible is not simply a new method of doing Bible study. The contemplation of the text, "letting the text read us," is not a tactic added on to the end of a study session. It involves bringing our real world and real neighborhoods to the text and then listening.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

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GOSHEN

Boyd calls leaders to 'act out their faith'

Pastors challenged to distinguish kingdom of world from kingdom of God.

Steven Stauffer

Greg Boyd speaks to pastors.

A company in the United States engraves Bible verses on weapons used in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Greg Boyd, speaker at the Jan. 18-21 School for Leadership Training (SLT) at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., this is not what Christians are called to do.

"We need to distinguish the kingdom of the world from the kingdom of God," said Boyd in the Jan. 19 plenary session.

Boyd, an internationally known speaker and author, told the near-record 300 participants at this year's conference that God's kingdom looks radically different from the world, especially when it comes to violence. The theme for this year's SLT gathering was "Centered in Christ in a Right and Left World."

"The kingdom of God looks like Jesus," said Boyd. "It cares about the people Jesus cared about; it does the things that Jesus did."

Boyd repeatedly issued a prophetic call for Christians to see themselves primarily as citizens of the kingdom of God.

"We don't get to choose who we love," Boyd said. "God chooses for us, and God chooses whoever is in front of us, whether they are enemies or friends."

Boyd joined seminary student Chris Johnson and Jennifer Davis Sensenig, lead pastor at Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, in reflecting on this theme.

Focusing on Psalm 146, Davis Sensenig described how this Scripture encourages Christians to live as part of God's kingdom.

She said that Christians living in God's kingdom cannot meet their needs at the expense of prisoners, the blind, the bowed down, strangers, orphans or widows. These groups are specifically mentioned in Psalm 146 and are often repeated by Jesus in the Gospels, she said.

Boyd, pastor of a Baptist church, encouraged the predominantly Mennonite audience to uphold its tradition of being in the world and not of it but in a different way, calling them to cling to the value of acting out their faith.

"Greg didn't say anything particularly new to me," said John Bender, pastor at Pittsburgh (Pa.) Mennonite Church, "but it was inspiring to hear someone from outside the Mennonite tradition talk to us about our Anabaptist theology and encourage us to hold onto it."

The conference included training on conflict in congregations led by David Brubaker, a professor in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding program. He demonstrated techniques for dealing constructively with conflict in groups.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

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CALENDAR

Celebrating our Spiritual Heritage: 300 Years of God's Faithfulness, March 21; 3:30 p.m., free worship service at the Fine Arts Center, Lancaster Mennonite School. Includes storytelling by John D. Roth, Henry Benner and Ken Sensenig, and premiere of the six-minute historical DVD, "Come Walk with Us." The Mennonite Children's Choir will also sing. Part of the **Lancaster Roots 300** events throughout 2010.

Stitches in Time: Pennsylvania German Decorative Arts Exhibits, display of antique quilts at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society headquarters and display of antique coverlets at the 1719 Hans Herr House, March 22-27, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. $5 admission to one exhibit, $8 for both. Friday evening, free open house at Society, 5-9 p.m.

Annual Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Banquet and Program, April 10; 6:30 p.m., at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland. Family-style banquet and program, open to all, with author and Goshen College professor, Steve Nolt, "Stories from 300 Years of Lancaster Mennonite History." Call 717-393-9745 to register.

WORKERS

Bender, Rose, began a term as pastor at Whitehall Mennonite Church, Whitehall, Pa., on Feb. 1.

Brubaker, Verle, ended as pastor at Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover, Md. as of Jan. 3.

Burkholder, Timothy, was ordained Jan. 24 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., for his work as associate director of church relations at Mennonite Education Agency.

Calkins, Scott, terminated his ordination with Mennonite Church USA and ended his pastorate with Covenant Mennonite Church plant, Elkton, Md. effective Dec. 11, 2009.

Eby, J. Wilmer, associate pastor at Masonville Mennonite Church, Washington Boro, Pa., resigned Jan. 3.

Glick, Karl, retired as pastor at Ark Bible Chapel, Boyertown, Pa. as of Dec. 31, 2009.

Greiser, David, was installed as pastor at North Baltimore Mennonite Church, Baltimore, Md,. on Jan. 17.

Harms, Loanne, ended a term as youth pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Jan. 18.

Hershey, Kurt E., associate pastor at Parkesburg Mennonite Church, Parkesburg, Pa., resigned Dec. 31, 2009.

Hostetter, Isaac E., deacon at Mechanic Grove Mennonite Church, Peach Bottom, Pa., retired Dec. 31, 2009.

Jones, Danny, was recognized and received by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in a covenant ceremony on Dec. 13, 2009, at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind., where he serves as pastor, for his ordination with a Southern Baptist Convention congregation.

Pelkey-Landes, Craig, ended as pastor at Oley Valley Mennonite Church, Oley, Pa., as of Dec. 31, 2009.

Yoder, John O., lead pastor at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa., resigned Dec. 2, 2009.

Yoder, Kathy D., was licensed toward ordination and installed as pastor at West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., on Jan. 31.

Yoder Harms, Dawn, ended as co-pastor at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa., as of Dec. 31, 2009.

OBITUARIES

Armstrong, Thelma I. Rufenacht, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 16. Spouse: Lloyd E. Armstrong (deceased). Parents: Glen and Laura Grieser Rufenacht. Children: Joan Greene, Larry, Nancy Emens, Keith; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Central Mennonite Church.

Bitikofer, Margaret M. Lucas, 96, Milford, Neb., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Paul Bitikofer (deceased). Parents: David and May Mayes Lucas. Children: Roselle Sandvold, Kathy Stutzman, Glenn, David, Peggy Bodam; 14 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 18 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Canton, Kan.

Castellano, Barbara Michalovic, 72, Anderson, Ind., died Nov. 25, 2009. Spouse: Pedro Castellano (deceased). Parents: Stephen M. and Elsie Michalovic. Children: Duane Bajner, Jeanette Zeigler, Doris Nussbaumm, Joe Castellano, Maila Solares, Glenn Castellano, Eddie Castellano; 15 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Graveside service: Dec. 4 at Glen Oak Cemetery, Mennonite Section, Chicago, Ill.

Charles, Martha Newcomer, 97, Lititz, Pa., Jan. 26. Spouse: Christian E. Charles (deceased). Parents: Jacob W. and Sarah Witmer Newcomer. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Landis Homes East Chapel, Lititz.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Davidhizar, Grace E. Marks, 86, Wakarusa, Ind., died Jan. 24. Spouse: George Davidhizar. Parents: Ed and Edith Hunsberger Marks. Children: Jean Griffin, Carolyn Bitikofer, Alan; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Galle, Bruce W., 61, Tampa, Fla., died Jan. 19. Spouse: Ethel Ledesma Galle. Parents: Gilbert and Mourine Vogt Galle. Children: Christopher, Christina Ryan; six grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Moundridge Funeral Home, Moundridge, Kan.

Geiser, Linea Yvonne Reimer, 73, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 4. Spouse: Leonard Ray Geiser. Parents: John H.W. and Anna Toews Reimer. Children: Erin Geiser, Jonathan, Ned; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Glick, Thelma A. Stoltzfus, 95, Belleville, Pa., died Nov. 20, 2009. Spouse: Elam Henry Glick (deceased). Parents: John William and Annie B. Zook Stoltzfus. Children: Esther Glick Wert, Darlis, Del, Loren; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 25 at Barrville Mennonite Church, Reedsville, Pa.

Heatwole, Mary Ethel, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 1. Parents: Joseph D. and Fannie Bell Shank Heatwole. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Heavener, Alice H. Landes, 100, Harleysville, Pa., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Guy M. Heavener (deceased). Parents: Elias and Elizabeth Hagey Landes. Children: Duane L., Elenore L. Heavener; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Herr, Elizabeth B. Buckwalter, 104, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Aaron H. Herr (deceased). Parents: Amos L. and Annie Bowers Buckwalter. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa.

Hershey, Miriam Z. Zander, 92, Gap, Pa., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Everett Hershey. Parents: Roy and Kathryn Woerth Zander. Children: Nancy K. Plumley, Ruth A. McGowan; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Hostetler, Bruce David, 61, Milford, Neb., died Jan. 21 of a heart attack. Spouse: Cheryl Hostetler Stutzman. Parents: F. Dale and Vivien Hostetler. Children: Lezlie Patton, Cydney Eshelman, Luke; three grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Hostetler, Jane Shaw, 85, Scottdale, Pa., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Ralph C. Hostetler, Jr. (deceased). Parents: Theodore R. and Ruth M. Showman Shaw. Children: R. Brent, Ruth Ann Hostetler, Nancy Jane Hostetler, David, Daniel, Theodore; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Jaberg, James Russell, 75, Berlin, Ohio, died Jan. 23 following a brief illness. Spouse: Susan Miller Jaberg. Parents: Lister and Irma Brand Jaberg. Children: David, Myrna Jaberg; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

Jones, Sylvia Mast, 71, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 3. Spouse: Richard Jones (deceased). Parents: Jerry and Elizabeth Mast. Children: Doyle Gingerich. Jan. 9 at Pereseim Funeral Home, Kalona.

Kauffman, Merrill J., 70, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 8 following an extended illness. Spouse: Shirley Stalter Kauffman. Parents: Ira and Glada Miller Kauffman. Children: Joy Detweiler, Kent, Steve; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kauffman, Sadie Miller, 96, Kalispell, Mont., died Dec. 28, 2009. Spouse: Reuben S. Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Daniel F. and Sarah Coblentz Miller. Children: Lowell, Nathan Myrene Iverson, Carol Kauffman, Gwendolyn Kauffman, Jere; 19 grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

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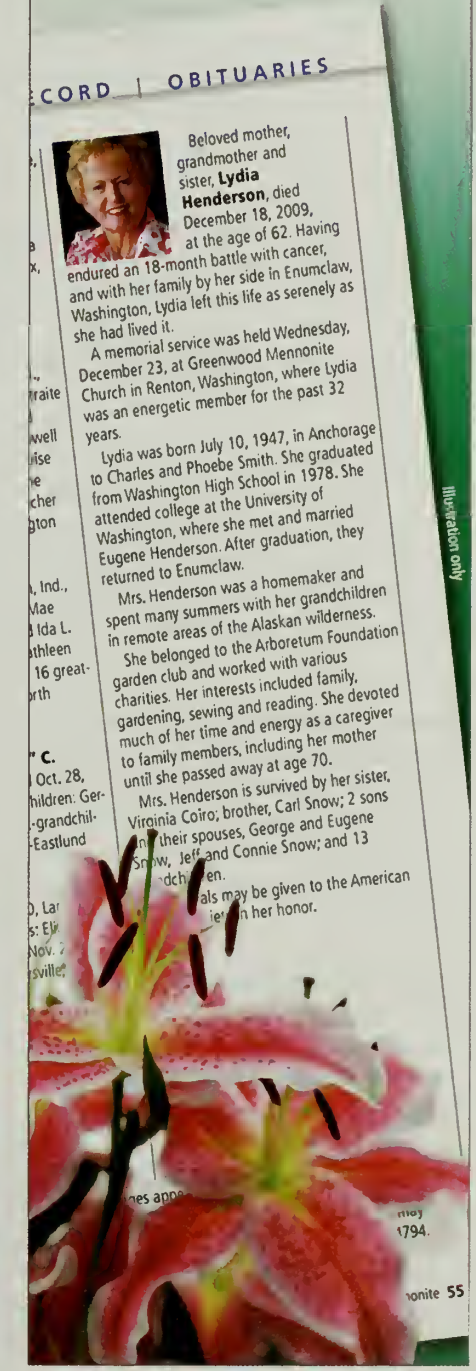

CORD | OBITUARIES

Beloved mother, grandmother and sister, **Lydia Henderson**, died December 18, 2009, at the age of 62. Having endured an 18-month battle with cancer, and with her family by her side in Enumclaw, Washington, Lydia left this life as serenely as she had lived it.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, December 23, at Greenwood Mennonite Church in Renton, Washington, where Lydia was an energetic member for the past 32 years.

Lydia was born July 10, 1947, in Anchorage to Charles and Phoebe Smith. She graduated from Washington High School in 1978. She attended college at the University of Washington, where she met and married Eugene Henderson. After graduation, they returned to Enumclaw.

Mrs. Henderson was a homemaker and spent many summers with her grandchildren in remote areas of the Alaskan wilderness.

She belonged to the Arboretum Foundation garden club and worked with various charities. Her interests included family, gardening, sewing and reading. She devoted much of her time and energy as a caregiver to family members, including her mother until she passed away at age 70.

Mrs. Henderson is survived by her sister, Virginia Coiro; brother, Carl Snow; 2 sons their spouses, George and Eugene Snow, Jeff and Connie Snow; and 13

als may be given to the American in her honor.

Kraemer, William "Bill" Irvin, 87, Iowa City, Iowa, died Dec. 24, 2009, in Madison, Wis. Spouse: Florence Rensberger Kraemer (deceased). Parents: Irvin F. and Clara L. Hoffman Kraemer. Children: Carmen Clark; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Landis, Ray Laverne, 74, Tunkhannock, Pa., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Emma Jean Mack Landis. Parents: Raymond S. and Evan Moore Landis. Children: Karen Alderfer, Kathy Landis Reimer, Kenneth, Konnie Landis Sutherland; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at First Baptist Church, Factoryville, Pa.

Marner, Ora Lynn, 97, Wellman, Iowa, died Jan. 8. Spouse: Eunice Lenore Reber Marner (deceased). Parents: Eli G. and Elizabeth Kinsinger Marner. Children: James, Loris Miller; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; six great-great grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Miller, Dorothy A. Landes, 77, Harleysville, Pa., died Feb. 7. Spouse: Willis A. Miller. Parents: Isaiah and Susan Alderfer Landes. Children: Beverly Birky, Kathy Detweiler; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Myers, Miriam T. Detweiler, 95, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 4. Spouse: C. Garwood Myers. Parents: Abram and Sarah Tyson Detweiler. Children: Eric, Gerald, Lee; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Oswald, Voyce Jean Waltermeyer, 57, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 9. Spouse: Lonny Oswald. Parents: Max and VonDell Hasenkamp Waltermeyer. Children: Corey, Kevin, Clark; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Schmidt, Phyllis Eileen Egli, 76, Hutchinson, Kan., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Kenneth Howard Schmidt. Parents: Emery Edwin and Edna Amanda Peterson Egli. Children: Arlin, Rita Martin, Nancy Magliery, Susan Funk; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, South Hutchinson.

Schrock, Walter L., 80, Shipshewana, Ind., died Jan. 16 of heart failure. Spouse: Wilma Jean "Jeannie" Miller Schrock. Parents: Tobias T. and Sarah Lambright Schrock. Children: Roxy Miller, Wanda Bender, Debra McDonald, Christine Frey, Kevin; 19 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Shank, Emma M. Eby, 97, Marion, Pa., died Jan. 18. Spouse: Paul E. Shank (deceased). Parents: Theodore and Emma Martin Eby. Children: Richard D., Delores K. Martin, Martha Bauman Shank; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 23 at Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Pa.

Slabaugh, Sarah A. Gerber, 97, Milford, Ind., died Jan. 29. Spouse: Roman Slabaugh (deceased). Parents: John and Barbara Gerber. Children: Delores Boyd, Shirley Graff, Patricia Yeater, Larry, Gloria Baumgartner; 11 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; nine great-great grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Jeffrey W., 20, Gap, Pa., died Dec. 19, 2009 from injuries sustained in a snowmobile accident. Parents: Abram M. and Anna Mae Stolzfoos Stoltzfus. Siblings: Charlene F. Thomas, Dawn M. Fisher, Daryl E. Funeral: Dec. 23 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Mildred Irene Graber, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 29 of cardiac arrest. Spouse: Edward B. Stoltzfus. Parents: Christian L. and Mina Roth Graber. Children: Rebecca Stoltzfus, Anita Breckbill, Eric, Philip; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Stutzman, Howard Eldon, 80, La Junta, Colo., died Dec. 18, 2009 of pulmonary fibrosis. Spouse: Carolyn Frost Stutzman. Parents: Samuel and Barbara Slagell Stutzman. Children: Mark; one grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 30 at First Nazarene Church, La Junta.

Unruh, Esther Voth, 81, Goessel, Kan., died Dec. 2, 2009. Spouse: C. Howard Unruh (deceased). Parents: David and Mary Voth Flaming Pankratz. Children: Tom, John, Fred, Bill; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 4 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Waltner, LaVerne R., 81, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 15 of heart failure. Spouse: LaNae Eisenbeis Waltner. Parents: Edward J.B. and Anna Tschetter Waltner. Children: Susan Zurawski, Lynda Stucky, Michael, LaMarr; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Wenger, Marian Elizabeth Smith, 81, Perkasie, Pa., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Herbert C. Wenger. Parents: Harvey and Anna Strouse Smith. Children: Jane Wenger Clemens, Michael, Cheryl M. Wenger Plank, John D.; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 9 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Wiens, Florence Margaret Wiens, 84, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 13, 2009. Spouse: Leonard Wiens. Parents: Daniel P. and Katie Heidebrecht Wiens. Children: Max, Karen Wiens Roth, Parry Wiens Bechtle; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Winsinger, William J., 94, Goessel, Kan., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Joy A, Stucky Winsinger (deceased). Parents: Dietrich R. and Elizabeth Rupp Winsinger. Funeral: Jan. 16 at Moundridge Funeral Home, Moundridge, Kan.

Bethany Christian Schools (grades 6-12; enrollment 260) invites applications for ***two full-time faculty positions*** for 2010-11: ***vocal/choral music teacher*** and ***athletic director***. Applicants should hold, or be qualified to obtain, Indiana licensure. To apply, submit electronically or by mail a resumé, letter of application, and philosophy of Christian education to: Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. Phone: 574 534-2567; Email: akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Illinois farm internship at **Plow Creek Farm**. Grow organic-type strawberries, blueberries, more. Mennonite Community, learning, room, board, small stipend. www.plowcreekfarm.com/intern.htm; 815-646-9910

Oak Grove Mennonite Church, a church of approx. 275 regular attendees in rural West Liberty, Ohio, is seeking a ***full-time associate pastor***. Primary responsibilities will be to share general pastoral duties with the lead pastor: including but not limited to preaching, teaching, visitation, etc. and to pastor the youth (9th-12th grade). The candidate should be committed to the Anabaptist Mennonite understanding of faith. For further information please contact Search Committee Chairman, Harmon Conrad through email at recumbant@hotmail.com or by phone at 937-465-1251.

Don't miss pantomime artist/speaker Cary Trivanovich and worship leader Monte Leister at ***Spruce Lake's Spring Family Weekend***, April 30-May 2, 2010. Bring trout license! 800-822-7505; www.sprucelake.org

Loan/Business Development Officer

MMA has an opportunity for a full-time loan/business development officer to receive and process loans and to provide information on credit union products and services to current and potential members in the Harrisonburg, Va., area. Qualified applicants will have excellent public relations skills, prior experience as a loan officer, and a thorough understanding of lending programs and related legal and regulatory standards.

MMA is an Anabaptist stewardship organization that helps people integrate their faith with their financial decisions. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our Web site, www.mma-online.org. Send cover letter and resume to:

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Greencroft Retirement Communities, ***VP of Operations for Walnut Hills***: A faith-based retirement system is seeking a VP of Operations for a continuing care retirement community in Walnut Creek, Ohio. Ohio Licensed Administrator (required) with strong leadership managerial/supervisory skills and three or more years of health care experience. Visit www.greencroft.org for details or call 574-537-4038 with questions. Resumés welcome at lisaf@greencroft.org, EOE

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is inviting candidates or suggestions of candidates for ***Director of Denominational Support Services***. This is a new top-level position supervised by the Executive Director. For information, see the employment opportunities listed in the "About us" section at www.mennoniteusa.org. Resumés can be sent to Shelley Buller at ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org. Application review will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and Racial/Ethnic people to apply.

Trinity Mennonite Church is located in the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains between Calgary and Okotoks, Alberta. We are a growing congregation with an active membership of about 100, with diverse ages, occupations and cultural backgrounds. We are actively involved with MC Canada and MC Alberta. We seek a ***pastor*** who will provide strong leadership and focus on the vision, mission and values defined by our congregation, working together with our members and participants to foster a faith community that is open and welcoming to new participants, and is founded upon the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith. Proposed start date on or about July 1, 2010. Please apply in confidence to: Rob.Doerksen@shaw.ca or Rob Doerksen, Trinity Mennonite Church, RR 1 Site 17 Box 21, DeWinton, AB T0L 0X0, Canada.
http://trinity.mennonitechurch.ad.ca/

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. seeks a ***transitional executive director*** to provide vision and oversight for all MCC programs in the United States as guided by the New Wine New Wineskins process. The director will implement organizational change in cooperation with the MCC (binational) executive director and the other MCC entities in Canada and the United States. A job description is available at mcc.org/serve. Send a letter of inquiry by April 1, 2010, to MCC U.S. Board Executive Search Committee, c/o MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46526, or via email at MCCUSEDSearch@mhsonline.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email advertising@themennonite.org.

ONLINE

Living the in-between

Sharon Kniss returned to Harrisonburg, Va., in August 2009 after spending three years in London, England, with Mennonite Mission Network.

I thought my life would begin when I turned 13. Then again when I turned 16. Then when I graduated from high school. Then I realized I would become a real adult when I graduated from university.

What I realize now is that life doesn't start and end at such well-defined moments of transition (ages 16, 21, 40, 50, 65; marriage, divorce, birth, death, a new job, a new worldview).

"Life is in the interstices of time" say Masson and George in *An Uncommon Correspondence.* It is in the in-between, in the gray matter between black and white.

We are given clear markers in Jesus' life at age 12 and age 30. But we assume the in-between time is irrelevant (it's not in the Bible after all) and that Jesus and the world were just waiting until he could begin his ministry at the magic age of 30.

I'm not convinced. But whether or not he was "just waiting," it seems the church has subconsciously adopted a pattern of children turning into adolescents and then into so-called "young adults"—a period of waiting or "exploring" or "testing out" in more active terms until they turn 30 and are allowed to participate in the life of the church. Or participate in the world or be accepted as an adult without the "young" adjective.

It is assumed (accurately) that when you are young you spend time considering what you may be called to do with your life. You explore; you test out ideas. And there's an understanding that by the time you reach age 30, you will have figured it out.

I'm not yet 30, but I've heard from many people from 30 well into their 60s who are still asking that question and still exploring and testing out ideas.

In July 2008, I had two friends die, one from cancer and one from an accident, aged 20 and 22. They weren't just waiting to become an occupational therapist or a nurse to fulfill their "calling." They were already living fully. Our calling in life is not to be a doctor or a father or a teacher. We may be called to a specific job, location or situation and move through another marked transition. But our greater calling, our eternal calling, is to *be*—a hungering and growing child of God, follower of Jesus, giver of love, in this moment, in this space, in this here and now.

I often find myself looking toward the next transition: a new job, new house, new degree, new family, when I turn 30, whatever it may be. But life is not about waiting for the next thing to come along so that life may begin.

The living, learning, loving and losing that I am doing right now—in my in-between time, my gray matter time—is just as significant, if not more so, than the potential future transition marker ahead. Learning how to live with the chaos of the in-between, in the uncertainty, in the imbalance, in the confusion is our calling. The church can't sit on its haunches and wait until its new "young adult" leaders turn 30 ("real adults") before using their gifts and talents. The gray matter and in-betweens only continue: new jobs, loss of faith, deaths, births, tragedies, new worldview.

The church can't sit on its haunches and wait until its new "young adult" leaders turn 30 ("real adults") before using their gifts and talents.

Life happens. All ages have contributions to make in the life of the church. If we wait until people cross particular thresholds, we're likely missing out and potentially also preserving a false notion that "real adults" have it all together: answers figured out, callings found and followed, lives stable and secure.

If we're overconcentrated on what's next or waiting for the next transition or threshold, then we forget about living in the now, in the in-between, and living in the present time becomes painfully dissatisfying.

But it is in that in-between that we find God actively at work: when we stop waiting and become aware of the present moment, of ourselves and of God and begin to live again—fully in the present moment, dealing with the unknown, the raw, the surprise.

When I can be fully present in the here-and-now as a child of God, that's grace for me. Found in the dark and the light, in the present, in the in-between. TM

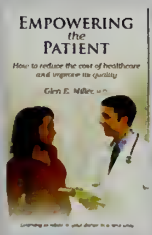
DVD REVIEWS

The Cove (PG-13) is a documentary that follows a group of activists who use surveillance equipment to film the slaughter of dolphins at a cove in Taijii, Japan, where fishermen kill 23,000 dolphins each year. The film also exposes the effects of the capture of dolphins for the lucrative tourist industry.—*Gordon Houser*

In the Loop (NR) is a funny, caustic, well-written satire on statecraft as U.S. and British government officials decide whether or not to invade a Middle Eastern country.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEW

Zeitoun by Dave Eggers (McSweeney's, 2009, $24) tells the harrowing story of Abdulrahman Zeitoun, a successful Syrian-born painting contractor who decides to stay in New Orleans and protect his property while his family flees. After the levees break, he uses a small canoe to rescue people, before being arrested by an armed squad and swept powerlessly into a vortex of bureaucratic brutality. This book shows how New Orleans devolved into a police state.—*gh*



Empowering the Patient: How to Reduce the Cost of Healthcare and Improve Its Quality by Glen E. Miller (Dog Ear Publishing, 2009, $14.95) is an eminently practical book that will help patients find ways to reduce their health-care costs. Written by a Mennonite physician with more than 40 years experience, this book addresses doctor-patient encounters, tells stories to help reshape our image of doctors and explores a variety of health-care issues. Every congregation should have this available for its members. See an excerpt on page 29.—*gh*

Inattention blindness

Pay attention to what you hear.—Mark 4:24
Wake up.—Revelation 3:2

Addiction hurts. It can even kill you and others. And here I'm not discussing alcohol or drug addiction. I'm referring to cell phones.

Distracted driving has gained much attention lately because of the inflated crash risk posed by drivers using cell phones to talk and text. One study has shown that 28 percent of driving accidents are caused by someone's inattention while using a cell phone. And the government recently introduced a law penalizing truck drivers and bus drivers for texting while driving.

The danger of such behavior seems obvious, yet it persists. Why? Are people so addicted to using their cell phones that they ignore basic safety? It seems so.

Now we hear of another problem: "distracted walking—which combines a pedestrian, an electronic device and an unseen crack in the sidewalk, the pole of a stop sign, a toy left on the living room floor or a parked (or sometimes moving) car," writes Richard Perry in *The New York Times*.

How widespread is this problem? Perry reports: "Slightly more than 1,000 pedestrians visited emergency rooms in 2008 because they got distracted and tripped, fell or ran into something while using a cell phone to talk or text. That was twice the number from 2007, which had nearly doubled from 2006, according to a study conducted by Ohio State University, which says it is the first to estimate such accidents."

Most often it's young people who injured themselves. About half the visits studied were by people under 30, and a quarter were 16 to 20 years old. But more than a quarter of those injured were 41 to 60 years old.

I walk regularly, and I know that even in a small town a walker needs to pay attention. We live in a car culture, and drivers don't always watch for walkers. All it takes is one inattentive driver, and you are in big trouble. Not giving attention to where you are walking only adds to the danger.

I'll repeat: This all should be obvious. Then why is it so widespread and such a growing problem?

Perry reports the finding of a recent study at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Wash., by psychology professor Ira Hyman and his students:

"One of the students dressed as a clown and unicycled around a central square on campus. About half the people walking past by themselves said they had seen the clown, and the number was slightly higher for people walking in pairs. But only 25 percent of people talking on a cell phone said they had, Hyman said."

The term for such preoccupation is "inattention blindness," meaning a person can be looking at an object but fail to register it or process what it is.

Hyman was particularly fascinated that people walking in pairs were more than twice as likely to see the clown as were people talking on a cell phone, suggesting that the act of simply having a conversation is not the cause of inattention blindness.

You can come up with your own applications for inattention blindness. It certainly can place its practitioners in danger, but it also hurts—or kills—others when vehicles are involved.

Since we are called to pay attention to how we live out our lives as followers of Jesus, we may want to ask ourselves, What may be blinding us? What addiction is hindering our Christian walk?

Gordon Houser, associate editor of The Mennonite

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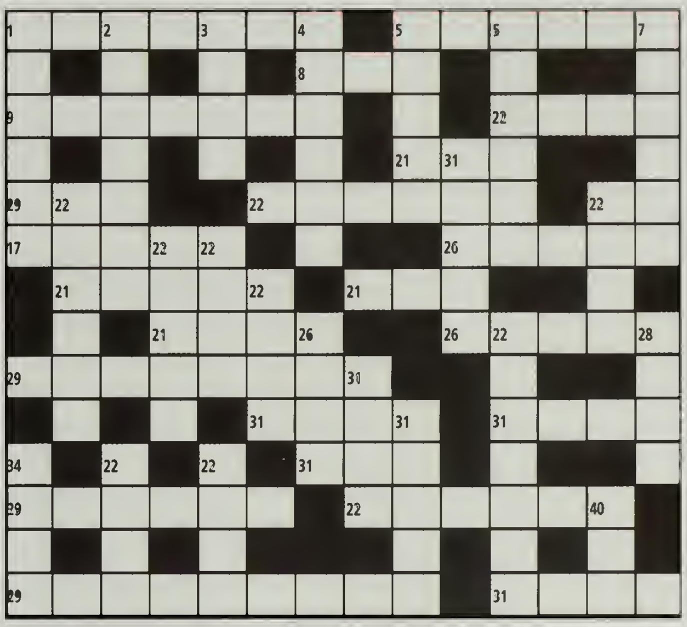
Group renewals for former Mennonite Church (MC) congregations are in the spring (former GC groups are in the fall). Group plan administrators can download all forms necessary at www.themennonite.org or call 800-790-2498 to have the forms emailed.

The glory of the Gospels

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



RECOGNITION:

To be recognized in our May issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 S. Main St. Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

April 1, 2010

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CITY

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EMAIL ADDRESS

All references are to the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

ACROSS

1. Jesus wept over his death.
5. Brother of Simon Peter.
8. No room here.
9. He silenced Zechariah.
10. "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his ___?"
11. When Jesus healed the paralytic, the crowd was filled with ___. Mt. 9.
13. Nicodemus asked, "How can a man be born when he is ___ ?"
15. Roman emperor (one word).
16. "… where I am, my servant also will ___." Jn. 12:26.
17. Salome was this relation to Herod Antipas.
20. "There will be signs in the sun, moon, and ___" Lk. 21 .
21. "… narrow the road that ___ to life …"
23. "Pick up your ___ and walk."
24. "The sun will be darkened, and the ___ will not give its light" Mt. 24.
26. Jesus preached to not only love your neighbor, but love your ___ as well.
29. This Old Testament prophet foretold of Herod's massacre of infants. Mt. 2.
31. The devil is called the "father of ___." Jn. 8:44.
33. Anyone who causes a child to sin should be thrown in the sea with a millstone around his ___. Mk. 9.
37. "The kingdom of heaven is like a ___ that was let down into the lake" Mt. 13.
38. Grown at Gethsemane (plural).
39. Five ___ and two fish.
41. This place name means "House of Bread."
42. If this causes you to sin, cut it off.

DOWN

1. Evil spirit said, "My name is ___ … for we are many."
2. Father of James and John.
3. What came down to wash away the foolish man's house.
4. Jesus healed a blind man and had him wash in the "Pool of ___." Jn. 9:7.
5. Father-in-law of Caiaphas. Jn. 18.
6. John prepared the way … "the voice of one calling in the ___ ." Mk. 1.
7. "I am sending you out like sheep among the ___."
12. When a woman poured perfume on Jesus, the disciples asked, "Why this ___ ?"
14. These "do not labor or spin."
16. The servants at the wedding in Cana filled the water jars to the ___ . Jn.2.
18. Jesus refers to this animal going through the eye of a needle.
19. Old Testament name for Idumea, origin of Herod.
22. Seed falling on good ___ produced a good crop. Mt. 13.
25. Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead at this town.
27. Jesus refers to this city as having repented at the preaching of Jonah. Lk. 11.
28. "For my ___ is easy and my burden is light." Mt. 11.
30. Jesus predicts betrayal: "He who shares my bread has lifted up his ___ against me." Jn. 13:18.
32. Jesus was sleeping when a furious ___ came up. Mt. 8.
34. ".the women took spices they had prepared and went to the ___ ."
35. "Corban" is a ___ devoted to God. Mk. 7:11.
36. The Samaritan woman at the ___ .
40. "He who does not honor the ___ does not honor the Father … " Jn. 5.

(continued from page 5)

meaning of his ministry. Some of us would call that learning; it makes the wonder and mystery and miracle of the incarnation all the more amazing, humbling and life-giving.—*Mary Ellen Meyer, Goshen, Ind.*

Saddened by national anthem

It is with real sadness that we read that Goshen (Ind.) College will play our nation's battle anthem followed by a prayer at sports events (see page 8). Doing this reenacts our nation's primary ritual of its civil religion that so skillfully hijacks reverence for God to create quasi-reverence for the state. It is stunning that an action of such theological and historical resonance was recommended by a task force drawn primarily from the athletic department.

The misplaced idea that civil religion rituals are "hospitality" for others ignores the content and the unconscious power of the ritual that counterfeits the identity and loyalty belonging to God alone. Is it possible that Goshen is simply missing the religious nature of the national anthem ritual in the United States? The superb teaching we value from Goshen faculty frankly puts to shame the thin and wishful rationale the administration propounds for this action. We believe the rationale will be forgotten in a season, but our family's distress for a school we have loved will continue until this decision is reversed. We commit to further dialogue and will keep Goshen in our prayers.—*Ruth Stoltzfus Jost, Timothy Stoltzfus Jost, Jacob Sider Jost, Laura Sider Jost, Micah Stoltzfus Jost, David Stoltzfus Jost, John Fairfield, Kathryn Stoltzfus Fairfield, Peter Fairfield, Bethany Versluis Fairfield, Andrew Fairfield*

Be careful about our beliefs

I read about Ryan Ahlgrim's survey concerning Anabaptist convictions ("Anglo Anabaptist Congregations in the Cities are Growing," January). I believe Anabaptist convictions have been based on the clear teachings of the Bible. The New Testament has been believed as the final special revelation of Scripture.

One of the themes throughout the Scriptures is the teaching of two kingdoms, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. I believe the teaching of the two kingdoms is still valid for today. We must beware of and oppose teachings that come from the kingdom of darkness. May we truly have spiritual discernment. May we be careful as to which ideas we name as Anabaptist beliefs/convictions. —*Daniel Sauder, Pittsgrove, N.J.*

Latent dynamics gone

Everett Thomas' strong endorsement of our new executive director is appropriate ("Turning the Page," January). Ervin Stutzman needs and deserves the support and prayers of the constituency. But how long do we need to be reminded of premerger percentages? Does the editor really believe that using 75/25 figures can contribute to greater MCUSA unity?

Some of us, in districts integrated prior to the denominational merger, wince when we hear or see divisive words and language. We are glad that those "latent dynamics" are mostly gone here and we hope they will quickly die elsewhere.—*Robert Hartzler, Wayland, Iowa*

Lacks spirit of unity

I was encouraged by three articles in the January issue, with a vision of new energy and unity for Mennonite Church USA. Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz asked Germanic Mennonites to "present a living faith divorced from their ethnicity." Jim Schrag was quoted in reference to our missional calling, "It takes us from our history of separation ... toward engagement with the world." Ervin Stutzman said, "We would be a much stronger church if we recognized the strengths that our diversity brings."

Then my hopes were shattered with Everett Thomas' editorial that called us to remember our pre-merger differences. Did he actually imply that former General Conference individuals should constitute a minority of leadership because only 25 percent of Mennonite Church USA members were former GCs? That we should look forward to Stutzman's leadership because he brings memories from old Mennonite culture? The editorial comments lacked the spirit of unity and forward-thinking reflected in the other articles.—*Suzanne Horner, West Liberty, Ohio*

Time to get behind Stutzman

I like the look and feel of the new *The Mennonite* publication. I appreciated the January editorial on the back page. Whatever our views on who the best leader would have been six months ago, it is time for us as a church to get behind the Mennonite Church USA executive secretary Ervin Stutzman and work for making our world better and the church organizations stronger. Thank you for your affirming words of our new leader.—*Mark King, Elkhart, Ind.*

Richly blessed by every article

I plucked the February issue out of the mailbox and decided to spend my usual 10 minutes scanning through the articles and letters. Hopefully I would hit upon one or two that would catch my interest. As I read, I soon realized I would need to get more comfortable because there was a lot of good stuff to absorb. One hour and 42 minutes later, I got off the couch with a feeling of gratitude for a very well done denominational magazine. I had been richly blessed in that time span by nearly every article in this issue. I like the new monthly format, and the quality of articles and writing styles both hold my interest and reward me. It's almost like that was your intent. Keep up the great work.—*Rex Hooley, Goshen, Ind.*

First things first Seek God's wisdom

In this column last month, I reflected on insights growing out of biblical passages using the word "first." One of those passages—James 3:17—provided the inspiration for this month.

The epistle of James is eminently practical as well as prophetic, addressing issues that plagued the church of his day and plague ours as well. The letter sounds almost like a New Testament version of Proverbs, offering wisdom to seekers of God's way in the world.

Early in his letter, James urges that anyone who lacks wisdom "should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault" (1:5). Certainly we need God's wisdom today as desperately as those who first received his letter. Like those believers, we must look to God for direction in the midst of temptation, disagreements among believers and assaults on our faith.

James makes it clear that not all people who claim wisdom are truly wise. In the controversies that divide believers, some harbor bitter envy or selfish ambition in their hearts. This produces "disorder and every evil practice" (3:14). But James asserts that God's wisdom stands in stark contrast to this earthly, unspiritual and demonic wisdom. "The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (3:17).

It is my hope that these seven characteristics of true wisdom will shape the priorities and practices of Mennonite Church USA. Two situations come to mind as I ponder the need for God's wisdom in our church:

First, the events at our 2009 church convention in Columbus, Ohio, reminded us that we are deeply divided regarding our beliefs and practice regarding human sexuality, particularly homosexuality. In response, the delegates adopted a resolution entitled "Following Christ and Growing Together as Communities Even in Conflict." Not long after, the Executive Board elicited feedback from every conference and associate group, seeking to respond to their needs for resources on this topic. Having read their responses, I sense that our church desperately needs God's wisdom.

Second, we are in the midst of discussions about churchwide structure. Two years ago, the Executive Board made some fairly radical proposals to reshape our church organization on the denominational level in order to better pursue our vision and mission. This action generated significant controversy. In response, the board invited LaVern Yutzy as a consultant to listen to constituents and then make recommendations for actions that would help us better achieve "alignment" in our structure. In late January, Yutzy submitted a 22-page report that is now available to anyone who wishes to see it. Again, I sense that our church needs wisdom from heaven as we consider this report.

In the upcoming forums for discussion of Yutzy's varied recommendations, let us to seek God's wisdom, which is "first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."

I take it from James that the first priority when dealing with strong differences is to examine our motives (see 4:1-3). Here I detect an echo of Jesus' familiar words, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye." Mixed or impure motives lead to malicious fights and quarrels.

It is difficult to discern the purity of our own motives (or someone else's). Yet we can at least attempt to be "peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."

The simple awareness of these virtues can alert us to the need for God's grace and wisdom. Even when we pursue opposing outcomes and voice strong disagreements with each other, I pray that God's Spirit will enable us to demonstrate the virtues of true wisdom. That must be our first priority.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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FROM THE EDITOR

God's avatar

Everett J. Thomas

God's good news has been shared in hundreds of different cultures for thousands of years. Each time, the message borrows something indigenous to those cultures to make the truth clear.

The record-breaking movie *Avatar* can be useful in sharing the gospel with a non-Christian, if we think of Jesus as God's avatar who lived on this planet 2,000 years ago.

For those who have not seen the movie, here's a quick summary: A rapacious company maintains a military-style base on another planet in order to mine a mineral far more valuable than anything on earth. But the primary location of this mineral is beneath the colony where some of the planet's inhabitants live. In order to infiltrate the colony, the company makes avatars of some employees. These avatars look like the 10-foot natives and can breath the air that is poisonous to earthlings. The main character is sent, via his avatar, into the colony to spy on them. Predictably, he falls in love and ends up switching sides.

The gospel message borrows something indigenous to culture to make the truth clear.

But the main character in *Avatar* is not a Christ figure (see box below). The reason for the death and resurrection in the movie is revenge—a direct contrast to the way God came among us in Jesus. In the movie, the main character chooses to leave his paraplegic earthling body and transfer his soul to a perfect avatar body so he can help destroy the enemy.

But the movie can introduce nonbelievers to something central to the biblical story. Webster's dictionary defines an avatar as "an incarnation in human form."

The avatar principle has been around a long time: An attorney in a courtroom personifies a defendant who may be absent. A proxy carries a vote belonging to someone not able to attend the meeting.

In Matthew 21, the vineyard owner sends first some servants and then his son to confront the wicked tenants. During the Lenten and Easter seasons, the notion of Jesus as God's avatar is central to the elements in Holy Week.

"I am in the Father and the Father is in me," Jesus says in John 14:11.

Jesus is God in the flesh. The ultimate manifestation of Jesus' humanness was that he died a human death. This death represents the depth of God's love for us.

"The whole wonder of the incarnation," Mary Ellen Meyer says in her letter on page 7, "is that our God, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, was willing to limit that power at a particular time and place within a human being."

This is what Christians remember during these seasons of the church year. Some make Lenten sacrifices as a way to connect with this self-limiting love. Some fast from Good Friday until Easter Sunday morning to commemorate Jesus's death.

In our culture, a popular movie can be a temporary vehicle to contrast with the assurance in John 3:17: God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The God of perfect love chose to let himself be killed in order to redeem our sinfulness and transform the human community. He did this as Jesus, incarnated in the same human flesh we know.—*ejt*

Avatar (PG-13) is beautiful, stunning in its cinematography. But its story is lame, preaching the unity of all things, then playing out a typical revenge fantasy.—*Gordon Houser capsule review, Mediaculture, February*

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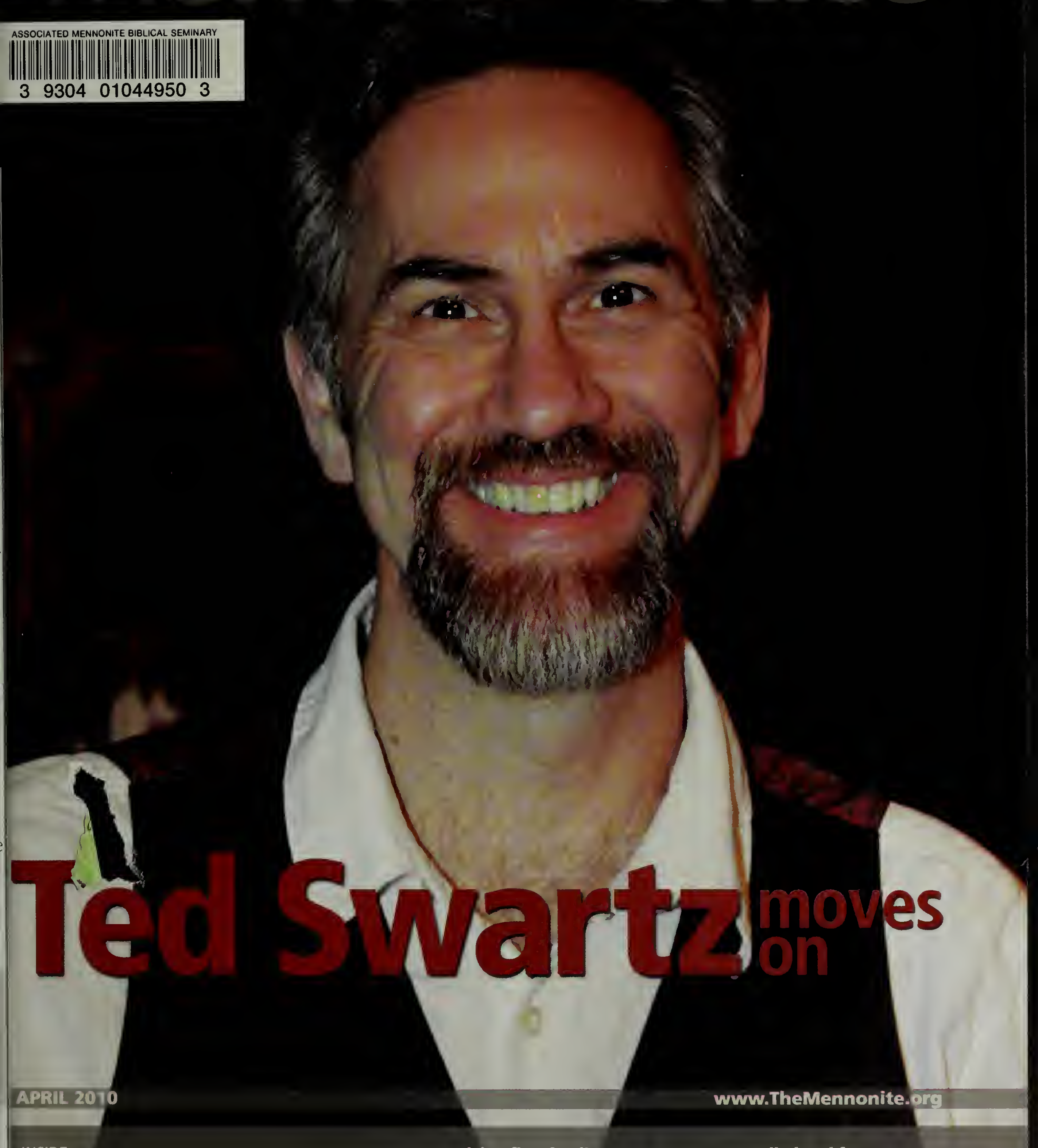

Ted Swartz moves on

APRIL 2010

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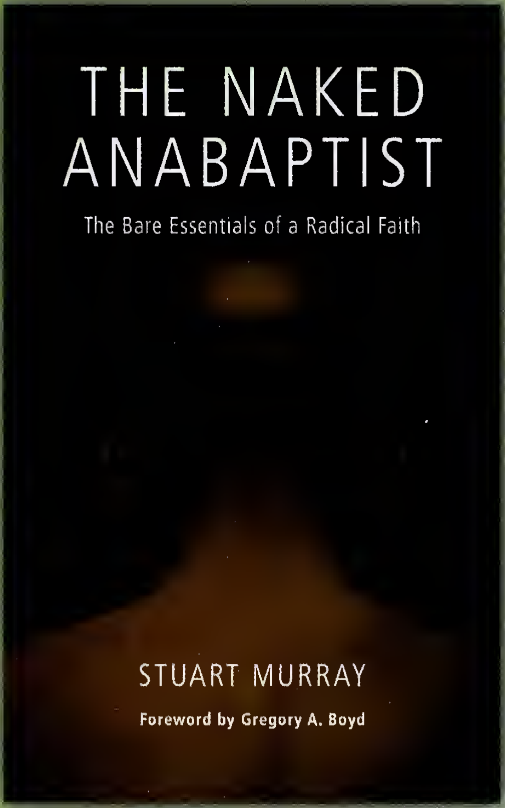
THE NAKED ANABAPTIST
The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith
STUART MURRAY
Foreword by Gregory A. Boyd

The Naked Anabaptist
The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith

What does Anabaptism look like when not clothed in Mennonite culture and traditions? Writing from Great Britain, Stuart Murray peels back the layers to reveal the core components of Anabaptism—and what they mean for faith in his context and ours. It's a way of following Jesus that challenges, disturbs, and inspires us, summoning us to wholehearted discipleship and worship. Read this book, and catch a vision for living a life of radical faith!

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ON THE COVER: Photo by Everett J. Thomas

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Where is the outrage?

The letter from Jerry Stanaway ("War and Abortion Both Violence," February) addresses only a part of the problem. By focusing only on abortion, we miss the concept of what reproduction is about.

Reproducing means taking responsibility. When two people beget a child, it is the responsibility of both to raise the child. That means being responsible financially for a child's education, medical expenses, clothing, feeding and providing shelter. It means being responsible for being there to share joys and sorrows and to provide emotional support.

When a man simply chooses not to be involved and walks away, the emotional and financial burden is placed on the mother.

Should men who choose not to be involved not be allowed to walk away with impunity? Should there not be some consequence, such as losing driving privileges, serving time in prison, doing community service, wearing a scarlet letter on their foreheads or something?

If that were to happen, it seems logical there wouldn't be as many unwanted pregnancies, therefore not as many abortions.

Where is the outrage for failure to take responsibility? It's past time to abolish the double standard.—*Cora Askren, Goshen, Ind.*

On playing the national anthem

I read with great regret of Goshen (Ind.) College's recent decision to begin playing the national anthem at select sporting events.

While I realize there is a diversity of practices among the Mennonite colleges and universities concerning the song, it seems especially unfortunate that Goshen's administration has chosen to cave to outside pressure.

As the 21st century rapidly progresses, decisions like this and other trends, such as increasing Mennonite participation in the political process, threaten our identity. We must remember that we belong to a kingdom that "is not of this world."*—Joel Koerner, Kalona, Iowa*

How can we sing a strange song in the Lord's land?*—Mary Sprunger-Froese, Colorado Springs, Colo.*

Before we say goodbye to Goshen College for its decision to play the national anthem, as some seem to be doing, we might reflect on that vital principle of re-examination. All may not be lost, after all. We all need to reconsider decisions made, sometimes unwisely, and Goshen has this ability. Taking the issue to the larger church for a second opinion would seem to be part of such reconsideration.

Certainly the national anthem is antithetical to our Anabaptist understandings of emulating the way of Jesus—both his message (Sermon on the Mount, parables) and his actions (a forgiving, nonviolent love for all). We often fail to live out this vision, and when we do, we ask for the forgiveness of each other and of the Eternal. But we do not compromise ahead of time, keeping the intention of Christ consciously and consistently before us, as our guiding spirit and light.

Goshen College continues witnessing to a forgiving, nonviolent love in many a classroom, in music, the arts and theater. This suggests as well reconsideration within.*—Leonard Gross, Goshen, Ind.*

Richer for diversity

I read with interest Everett Thomas' February editorial ("Almost Mennonite") about what a Mennonite is today. It inspired me to go through my own church's directory and count how many adults over age 18 are not first-generation Mennonite. Two-fifths of our members can claim their family has been Mennonite for more than one generation.

I believe our congregation is all the richer for this diversity. Instead of talking about our past, we focus on what it means to be Mennonite today: peace, justice and being a community.—*Rebecca Bare, Champaign, Ill.*

The push and pull of faith

I want to thank you for doing such a good job with the article on Penelope Moon (February). Her story connects with mine in that I left my lifetime home as a Presbyterian to be "rebaptized" into the Mennonite church. I surely understand her saying what she did about finding one's self between two places. I was a bit more sure of my decision than she says she was when I "jumped," but the issue of walking away from a history is not easy.

When I see this kind of reporting, I want to cry. I am so proud to be a part of the Mennonite denomination where people can come and find a home. I surely have done that. Thank you, Penelope, for having the guts to let your story be told.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Satan has an easy time

I had a dream where a few of us had bread together and a small cup of wine. We had good fellowship together. A day or so later our shuffle group had snacks and a cup of grape juice; we had fun and called it Communion.

I have a vision where many small and large groups can have Communion together and find forgiveness, love, joy, peace and more good fruits from the Spirit of God. We can have all this and much more through Jesus the Creator, Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, Servant, Singer of Praises Eternally and much more.

But in this world, it is time to wake up. Satan, the evil one, comes as an angel of light to deceive and blind and lie and brainwash us. Satan also comes as a lion to devour and kill. Satan is attacking us in many ways. For many who do not realize the evil around, Satan has a pretty easy time to deceive and lead astray.

It is time to come and turn to the supernatural authoritative word, the Bible, which says in Revelation 3:20, the words of Jesus, "I am now standing at the door (of your heart) and knocking. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will be his guest and feast with him and he with me."

If Christians unite with the Lord, we will see miracles in our spirit and all around us. If good people get together with God's people, we will see an awakening in our lives, our families, our community, county, state, United States and the world. We can be a light in the world of darkness headed for destruction. Jesus is the light of the world.

Time is running out; we need to do it now before it gets too dark.—*Wayne Kratzer, Kidron, Ohio*

IN THIS ISSUE

In the fall of 2008, we asked Ted Swartz if he would be ready to talk about the loss of his "Ted & Lee" partner, Lee Eshleman. At that time, he said he was not yet ready. We asked again last fall. This time he said yes. So we commissioned Jim Bishop to write our cover story entitled, "The Show Must Go On" (page 12).

It is not easy for a monthly magazine to break a big news story. But in this issue we bring the news that some $3 million will be distributed to 180 former General Conference Mennonite Church leaders (see page 37). We appreciate the trust shown to us by Mennonite Church USA executive leadership staff, who first informed us of this development in mid-January.

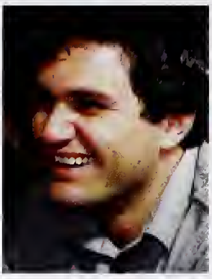
The News Analysis section (pages 45-47) represents our most ambitious research project so far. First, assistant editor Anna Groff polled all area conferences to categorize church plants and other initiatives. Then Dee Birkey, our designer, plotted them on a U.S. map. We offer this research as a way to illustrate God's missional activity in our midst.

Several major meetings get original reporting in this issue: the formal installation of Ervin Stutzman as Mennonite Church USA's executive director (page 38) and the Mennonite Health Assembly (page 39).

We also welcome former associate editor Rich Preheim back to the pages of *The Mennonite*, now as director of Mennonite Church USA's Historical Committee. His first Leadership column is on page 34.

Since we changed to a monthly frequency, we do not usually report the results of each online poll at our Web site, www.themennonite.org. But the question we posed for most of March drew a record number of voters: Should Mennonite schools play the national anthem before sporting events? The results on are page 60.—*Editor*

Robin Anne, a friend of God



Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Robin died of pneumonia in the woods behind Wal-Mart. She lived in the forest for the past decade, but it wouldn't be exactly true to say that she was "homeless." She called the forest her home. She turned the woods into her dwelling by hanging pictures of her family on the trees surrounding her cozy tent.

I can't say that I knew her well. We mostly chatted about the weather. I ate lunch and talked and prayed with her and the other people who wandered out from the forest to meet us near the highway every Wednesday.

At her memorial service, I learned a lot more about Robin.

Doug stepped up to the pulpit first. He's a retired man who regularly brings food for our Wednesday meals. He spoke about Robin's selfless concern for her friends. Every time Doug would see her, Robin told him about someone else who needed care. She seemed to keep a list: Francis and Don need a new tent, Karl needs a sleeping bag, Cliff needs a few dollars, check in on John because he is depressed.

Karl also took a turn at the microphone and told stories about how Robin always took care of him even though she didn't have much. She would give her few dollars away if Karl said he needed it, even though everyone knew he was a drunk.

Solidarity is the shape of Jesus' life of love. He lived among his beloved.

The folks that spoke during the memorial service painted a portrait of Robin as one who glowed with Christ's gentle love—a warm fire in the forest, a friend of God.

According to First John, to be a friend of God one must learn to abide in the love of Jesus: "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (1 John 4:16).

I think Robin was one of the beloved friends of God. She knew what it meant to abide in God's love. She knew what John knew, that God's love is something we do with our bodies; it has more to do with lifestyle than emotions. We love God through what we do for one another.

"Beloved," John wrote, "if we love one another, God lives in us" (4:12).

God's love is played out materially, with our stuff. John has strong words for the rest of us who don't share like Robin did: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (3:17).

At the memorial service, friends testified to Robin's generosity. She shared everything with friends and strangers. And that's what it looks like to dwell in the depths of God's love, to be one of God's beloved. Robin's generous life echoed First John's gospel of love.

John uses the Greek word "agape" where our translators write "love." But agape means so much more than what we usually think of as love.

Dorothee Soelle, the German theologian and activist, helps us see the profound commitments involved in agape.

"The best translation of what the early Christians called agape," Soelle writes in *The Mystery of Death*, "is still 'solidarity.'"

God's love is solidarity. Agape as loving solidarity is what we learn through the incarnation of Christ. Jesus is God's love manifest as solidarity.

As John says, "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him" (4:9). Solidarity is simply the movement of God becoming human in Jesus Christ: "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (4:2). After all, Jesus is called Immanuel, God with us.

Solidarity is the shape of Jesus' life of love. He lived among his beloved. And so did Robin. That's what it means to be a friend of God, one of the beloved.

God comes to us when we follow Robin's wandering path into the forests behind Wal-Mart—or wherever the lonely hang out. We befriend God when we draw near to God's children, our sisters and brothers, friends and strangers. Love happens when you let a stranger call you a friend. TM

After the annunciation

by Tania Runyan

She couldn't sleep.
Lightning flickered in her head.
Her toes curled and uncurled.

Strange how the world
slumps on as usual, she thought.
Same brown mountains outside,
same cattle herd of snores
from her father.

But even she
couldn't think of angels now,
nor bellies nor saviors
nor blood. Just the images
from yesterday, when she walked
through the marketplace
and knew nothing.

The leprous old woman
crouched outside the city gate,
fingertips dissolving
like bread in the rain.

Two skeletal boys
poking through the mud
for shreds of fish.

Bruised and bejeweled
prostitutes hovering
by the leering vegetable vendors.

Everyone who is probably
lying awake like me, she thought.
Feeling too much. Wondering
why they have been chosen.
Waiting for the world
to start over.

Tania Runyan lives in Lindenhurst, Ill.

Conference plan delayed

GOSHEN, Ind.—Franconia Mennonite Conference (FMC) leaders had decided to lay off some of their staff.

"It is an attempt to retool," R. Blaine Detwiler said on March 2. "[It is] not because of job performance. The staff have been doing their work almost too well."

Detwiler, conference moderator and pastor at Lakeview Mennonite Church in Susquehanna, Pa., said the instincts of the churches is to support the conference and conference initiatives. FMC has been working to decentralize its ministries and put them back in the hands of congregations, Detwiler said.

But a statement posted on the FMC Web site on March 16 said the plan is now delayed.

"The plan to lay off staff is on hold while an in-depth review of our conference is undertaken," says the statement. "This review will include our conference, its board, executive minister, staff and congregations. The conference has retained LaVern Yutzy, a consulting associate with Mennonite Health Services Alliance" to help with the review, says the statement.

According to the Web site, FMC has 17 staff members, but not all are full-time.—*Everett J. Thomas*

King new dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Michael A. King, a longtime writer, editor, publisher and pastor from Telford, Pa., has been named the new vice president and dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS), Harrisonburg, Va. King will begin his new role July 1. He succeeds Ervin R. Stutzman, who held the position for nine years. Stutzman has begun serving as the new executive director of Mennonite Church USA. Sara Wenger Shenk is interim dean.—*EMS*

MMA to change name

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Mutual Aid, which prefers to be called MMA, told the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board on Feb. 18 that it has hired a consultant to develop a new corporate identity and name "that brings together all parts of MMA into a unified brand." Among the reasons: MMA members are confused by the variety of names currently being used; Mennonites no longer seek out other Mennonites to do business with as they did two generations ago; as an organization that works with multiple denominations, the word "Mennonite" is both a positive and a negative; in Internet search engines, the acronym "MMA" has been taken over by Mixed Martial Arts. MMA planned to release the name to the public on March 31.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Everett J. Thomas

Friedenswald's first mentor-mentee day

On Feb. 27, Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., held its first mentor-mentee day; it included a game called "Spot." Here (from left) Efrain Núñez and his mentee, Lane Groves, stand on a spot next to Gail Shetler and her mentee, Madison Miller. All four are from Goshen, Ind.—*Everett J. Thomas*

MC USA moderator questions MCC

GOSHEN, Ind.—In a letter dated Dec. 28, 2009, Mennonite Church USA moderator Ed Diller listed 13 concerns about the restructuring process now underway at Mennonite Central Committee.

Diller expressed his concern that MCC will become a nongovernment identity, as has happened to Heifer International, and insisted that it "remain close to the church and not go the way of other nonprofit organizations." As to its accountability to sponsoring denominations, Diller said, "Global Anabaptists should participate in a [new] governance board, but non-Anabaptists should not."

Diller also said, "Denominational representatives at all levels must be ... appointed by and accountable to the denominations" that support MCC. Anticipating that the process, called "New Wine/New Wineskins" by MCC, will require changes to MCC bylaws, Diller said, "Late approval of the bylaws is a recipe for problems. MCC is too important for Mennonite Church USA to have an up-or-down voice at the end."

On March 2, MCC executive director Arli Klassen said the letter was requested by MCC in their first round of feedback. Klassen said there will be two more rounds of feedback during 2010. In 2011, details of the organizational change will be shared with all sponsoring denominations, with final approval of the changes in late 2011—*Everett J. Thomas*

GAMEO bolstered by new content

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Researcher, author and historian Helmut T. Huebert has donated his Russian Mennonite research to the growing Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Huebert is the author of nine books and co-author of the best-selling book *Mennonite Historical Atlas* with William Schroeder. Huebert's books documenting settlements, individuals and estates contain biographical information on influential Mennonites.—*Conrad Stoesz*

Painting presented to Harvard Divinity School

LAWRENCE, Kan.—Abner Hershberger, a professor at Goshen (Ind.) College for 34 years, donated a painting to the Harvard Divinity School at a tea honoring Gordon D. Kaufman, 84, in late January. Hershberger credits Kaufman for inspiring his work. The painting, "Heritage Field as Color II," reflects Hershberger's interest in Kaufman's concept of God as creativity itself. "By chance, I read something by Kaufman on creativity in my early years as an artist," Hershberger says. "I never forgot it, since it reinforced what engaging in the act of painting taught me. Being able to connect creativity with faith provided the connection I needed over these many years."—*Barbara Yoder*

Marlene Kropf to retire

ELKHART, Ind.—Marlene Kropf will retire Sept. 6 from her position as denominational minister of worship with Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership. The date marks the 27th anniversary of her employment with the Mennonite church. She will continue as an associate professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Completion of Kropf's work in denominational ministry has marked a job change for her administrative assistant. Evon Castro transitioned last Nov. 30 from the Elkhart office to the Mennonite Education Agency in Goshen, Ind.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Bluffton, Mennonite Home receive $1 million

BLUFFTON, Ohio—James and Frieda Basinger of Bisbee, Ariz., left their estate, estimated to be valued at $1 million, to Bluffton (Ohio) University, their alma mater, and Mennonite Home Communities. On Feb. 9, at Mennonite Memorial Home, a property of Mennonite Home Communities, Bluffton University president James M. Harder announced the gift.—*Bluffton University*

Ben Depp

Mennonite Central Committee sends meat

Deis Succes, left, and Ryan Schlangen unload cases of Mennonite Central Committee's canned meat for distribution through an MCC partner, the Christian Center for Integrated Development in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.—*MCC*

CPT founder Stoltzfus dies

CHICAGO—Gene Stolzfus, founding director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, died March 10 after a heart attack. He served as CPT director from its founding in 1988 until 2004, when he retired and moved to Fort Frances, Ontario. He was born in 1940.

In the early 1970s, Stoltzfus directed the General Conference Mennonite Church voluntary service program. In the late 1970s, he and Dorothy Friesen, his wife, codirected the Mennonite Central Committee program in the Philippines and later helped establish Synapses, a grassroots international peace and justice organization in Chicago to connect the United States and people in the developing world.

Stoltzfus graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College and held a master's degree in South and Southeast Asian Studies from American University, Washington, and a Master of Divinity from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.—*CPT*

Mission Network hears from partners in Chile

ELKHART, Ind.—An 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck Chile on Feb. 27 and continued in the days following. Mennonite Mission Network relates with several groups of Anabaptists and Mennonites in Chile and is in partnership with Mennonite Church Canada. Mónica Parada and her husband, Carlos Gallardo, who together pastor in Concepción, survived the earthquake. Samuel Tripainao, from the Mennonite church in Santiago, also survived. The family of Raquel Contreras, president of the Union of Baptist Churches in Chile, survived.

Mennonite Central Committee has allocated $150,000 to relief efforts in Chile.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Idaho utility company pays customers to stop using power

Four decades ago, when Sid Erwin began his career as an inspector at the Idaho Power Company, a string of new hydroelectric plants was pumping out power faster than locals could buy it. Soon enough, Erwin recalls, the utility began sending representatives to rural areas, urging farmers to use more electricity when irrigating their crops.

These days, Idaho's farmers are being paid to stop using power.

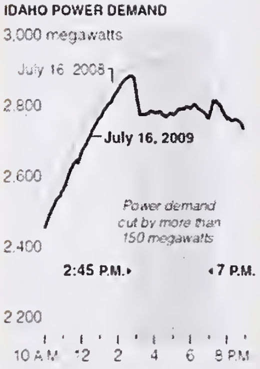
Since 2004, Idaho Power has been paying farmers like Erwin to cut power use at crucial times, resulting in drop-offs of as much as 5.6 percent of peak power demand.

In a related program, it pays homeowners to turn off their air-conditioners briefly at times of high demand.

Other efficiency initiatives by the utility, including one promoting attic insulation, have saved about 500,000 megawatt-hours of power since 2002, according to the company—roughly equal to the amount used by 5,000 gadget-filled homes over eight years.

Taming Peak Demand

Idaho Power pays some customers to cut electric use at times of peak demand as a way to slow the need for new power plants. Here are the results from one day last summer



Source: Idaho Power THE NEW YORK TIMES

To pay for these and other energy-saving measures, Idaho customers—individuals and companies—are charged a 4.75 percent "energy efficiency" rider on their electric bills, one of the highest percentage charges of this kind in the country.

"It's clearly iconic in terms of a utility that's turned the corner," says Tom Eckman, the manager of conservation resources with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, a planning group created by Congress. "They have gone from pretty much ground zero to a fairly aggressive program level."

The company's efforts are especially striking given that the push for energy efficiency is generally associated with coastal states like California and Massachusetts, not with a state whose electric rates are among the lowest in the country.

But the concept has rung true for Idaho's farmers, anglers and snowbirds, who have helped keep the state nearly free of coal plants. They have been largely receptive to the utility's arguments that it is cheaper to save energy than to build new power plants.

Vast amounts of energy are required to pump water up to the state's plains from the Snake River or from wells. The largest farms can use as much electricity as several thousand homes. In the summer, big farms keep their pumps on nearly 24 hours every day.

In recent years, Idaho Power decided that farmers could help it reduce the load on sunny summer days, when air-conditioners and other gadgets are on, by turning off their pumps for up to 15 hours a week.

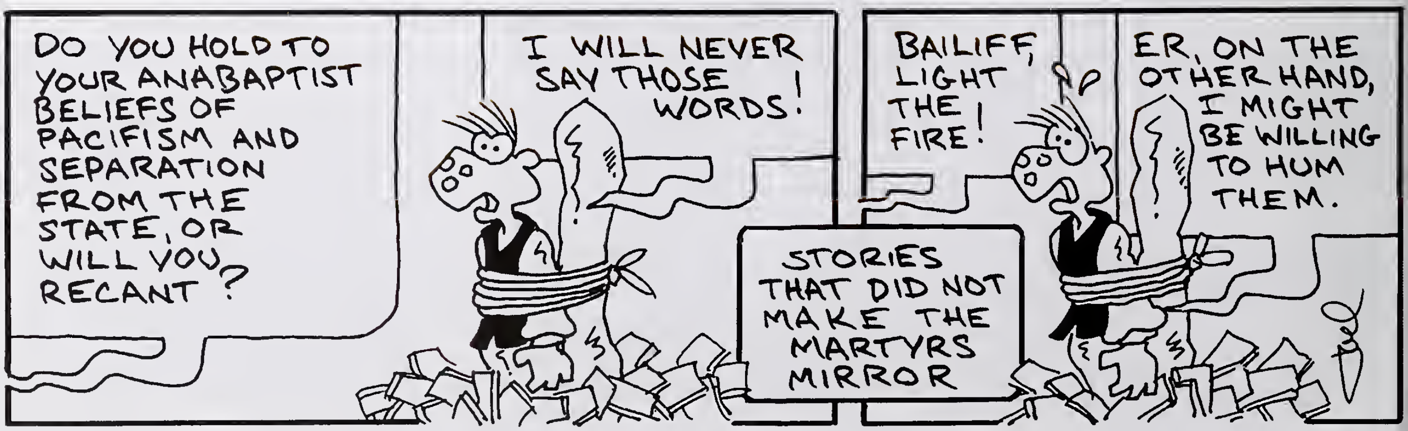
This concept, called demand response, involves paying users to make small sacrifices when there is an urgent need for extra power (the "peak"). The utility can then rely on cutting some demand on its system at crucial times—and, in theory, avoid the cost of building a new plant just to meet those peak needs.

Executives say the program lowers use during peak periods by about 1 percent. Participants are paid $7 a month during the summer.

Courtney Washburn says her electric bill has dropped by about 30 percent as a result of attic insulation and the $7 credit.—*Kate Galbraith in* The New York Times

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


DO YOU HOLD TO YOUR ANABAPTIST BELIEFS OF PACIFISM AND SEPARATION FROM THE STATE, OR WILL YOU RECANT?
I WILL NEVER SAY THOSE WORDS!
BAILIFF, LIGHT THE FIRE!
ER, ON THE OTHER HAND, I MIGHT BE WILLING TO HUM THEM.
STORIES THAT DID NOT MAKE THE MARTYRS MIRROR

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “People have a lot of fear. The flip side of fear is understanding. When you travel to places new to you, you understand more, so you fear less. And then you can love people, as a Christian should.” —*Rick Steves, author of* Travel as a Political Act, *in* The Christian Century

Churches often do more harm than good

American Christians aren’t doing enough to alleviate poverty, and when they attempt to do so, they often do more harm than good. So say Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, authors of *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself* (Moody Publishers).

“Handing over money is fast and easy ... and therein resides the problem of many poverty-alleviation efforts,” say Corbett and Fikkert of the Chalmers Center for Economic Development, which equips churches around the world to minister to the economic and spiritual needs of low-income people (www.chalmers.org).

$403 billion

The amount cardiovascular disease cost in 2006 in medical bills and lost productivity.—*Newsweek*

The authors discuss the dangers of “McDevelopment”—using a “blueprint approach” in which the economically nonpoor develop a standardized product and then roll out that product in cookie-cutter fashion on a massive scale devoid of the essential relational dimensions. Such a “fast-food-franchise approach to poverty alleviation ... has resulted in more than 2.5 billion poor people not being served,” the authors write.

They conclude: “North American Christians are simply not doing enough. We are the richest people ever to walk the face of the earth. We do not necessarily need to feel guilty about our wealth. But we do need to get up every morning with a deep sense that something is terribly wrong with the world and yearn and strive to do something about it.”—*Bernie Alimonti*

Coptic Christians killed in Egypt

The drive-by gunfire killing of six Coptic Christians in Egypt at their church on Jan. 6, the eve of their Christmas celebration, has drawn widespread shock from the Vatican and church leaders in Europe, the Middle East and Australia. Jerusalem Lutheran Bishop Munib Youman has denounced the killing of the Christians and a Muslim security officer. Some nine others were injured in the attack in the upper Nile city of Nag Hammadi. Of Egypt’s 83 million people, Coptic Christians account for about 9 percent and Muslims 90 percent. —*The Christian Century*

Hurt Locker, Glee win awards

The Catholics in Media Associates on Feb. 28 honored *The Hurt Locker* and Fox Television’s *Glee* with its annual awards for best film and TV show, respectively. The CIMA Awards seek “to promote and applaud individuals, films and TV programs that uplift the spirit and help us better understand what it is to be part of the human family.”—*Religion Press Release Services*

Don’t sit too long

Sitting is unhealthy, according to recent studies. Scientists are increasingly warning that sitting for prolonged periods—even if you also exercise regularly—could be bad for your health. Research is preliminary, but several studies suggest people who spend most of their days sitting are more likely to be fat, have a heart attack or even die.—*Associated Press*

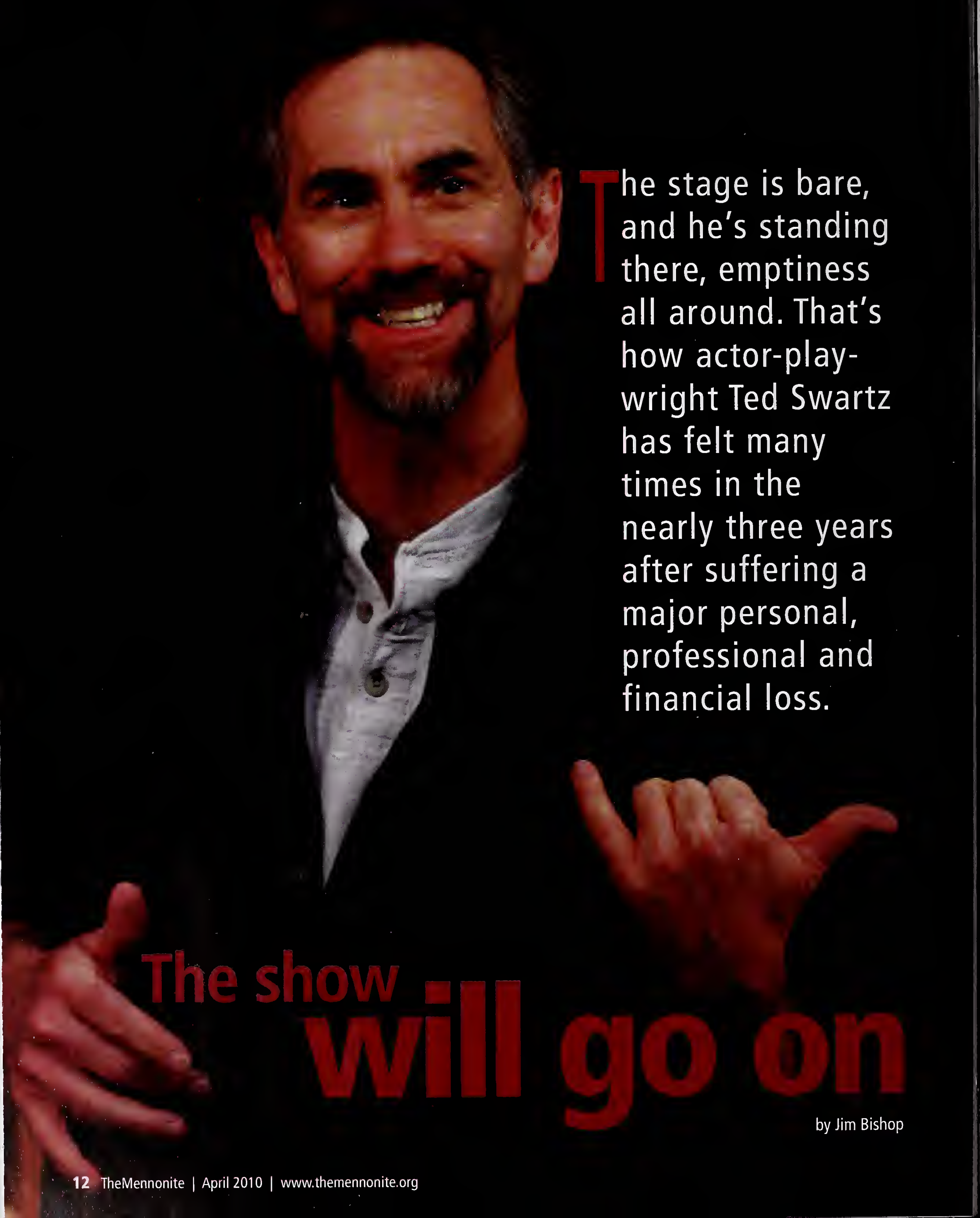
Klansman turns preacher

A former Ku Klux Klan national leader is now an ordained minister in the Church of God in Christ, the largest historically black denomination in the United States. Johnny Lee Clary joined the Klan at age 14 and worked his way up to imperial wizard, the group’s highest position. Clary left the KKK 80 years ago and now travels the country speaking on fighting terrorism. —*Christianity Today*

Suggestions for government programs to help fight cardiovascular disease

1. Require graphic warnings on cigarette packages.
2. Sponsor “commitment contracts” to quit smoking.
3. Subsidize whole grains, fruits and vegetables in the food-stamp program.
4. Set targets for salt reduction.
5. Incorporate physical education into No Child Left Behind.
6. Require that sidewalks and bike lanes be part of every federally funded road project.

—*Newsweek*



The show will go on

by Jim Bishop

The stage is bare, and he's standing there, emptiness all around. That's how actor-playwright Ted Swartz has felt many times in the nearly three years after suffering a major personal, professional and financial loss.

Mennonite actor-playwright Ted Swartz has overcome loss.

From 1987 to 2007, Ted and his creative partner, Lee Eshleman, the duo popularly known as Ted & Lee, had captivated upward to one-quarter million people across the United States and into Canada, Kenya and Japan with their trademark quirky, dramatic takes on everyday life—through imaginative monologues, sketches and full-length productions, many on biblical themes and always liberally laced with wholesome humor.

The relationships Ted & Lee explored in their theatrical pieces usually took a different bent—the human responding to the Divine, prompting unpredictable yet profound responses both from actors and audiences.

They became household names, first in Mennonite circles and then spilling across denominational lines as more people came to experience their delightful on-stage presence and performances. Their careers accelerated after gaining entrée to the Staley Christian Lecture Series circuit and performing at national youth events, including the late Mike Yaconelli's Youth Specialties ministries.

It wasn't without struggles, personally, professionally and especially economically. Keeping the specter of the starving artist at bay was all too real for the duo.

Then the unthinkable happened.

Ted & Lee were scheduled to perform "Live at Jacob's Ladder," a musical they had written with composer Ken Medema, May 18-19, 2007, at Eastern Mennonite High School (EMHS) in Harrisonburg, Va. The show didn't go on.

Late afternoon of May 17, Lee, 45, lost a long struggle with depression and took his life at his Harrisonburg home, leaving his wife, Reagan, and children Nicolas, Sarah and Gabe, extended family members and countless friends and fans around the world.

"To say it was devastating is putting it mildly," Ted says. "I lost my business associate, my longtime creative partner and my best friend—all at once.

"Lee loved wrapping laughter around magical moments of God's grace and presence," Ted said at the memorial service attended by more than 800 people in Harrisonburg. "He was gifted greatly, flawed greatly, he was greatly human, and he was greatly loved by God and by so many in the world."

But the 53-year-old Harrisonburg artist has moved forward, determined that the curtain will open, the spotlights come up and the interaction between actor or actors and audience continue.

He simply wishes at the moment for more patrons at the box office.

New Looks at the Old Old Story

Ted speaks passionately of his "calling" to a theatrical career, even though he didn't sense that as a hormone-laden teenager at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa., who married his high school sweetheart, Sue Althouse, at age 19 and worked in his father's meat-cutting business in Spring City, Pa., for 12 years.

"That experience taught me a lot about people," Ted says, but as time passed he grew restless behind the counter, the business eventually closed and members at Plains Mennonite Church in Lansdale encouraged him to continue his education beyond a year of community college.

Keeping the specter of the starving artist at bay was all too real for the duo.

In 1987, at age 30, Ted and Sue and sons Eliot, Derek and Ian moved to Harrisonburg to enroll at Eastern Mennonite University. He got involved in EMU theater productions and "fell in love" with the greasepaint and the stage, earning a bachelor's degree in liberal arts in 1989.

Ted went on to graduate in 1992 with a master of arts in church leadership degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and a sense of ministry that would involve a different kind of pulpit to communicate the story of God's love affair with creation.

An inauspicious beginning

The dramatic duo's coming together began at Spruce Lake Retreat in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Ted, then a student at EMU, had prepared a series of comedy sketches for a youth leaders gathering at the Franconia Mennonite Conference-sponsored camp. The material was written for two people, but at the last minute his partner backed out.

Then EMU president Joseph L. Lapp introduced Ted to Lee, a 1986 art graduate of the university

Ted and Lee as fast friends: catching up after the worship service at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., the first Sunday of April 2007, a little more than a month before Lee's death. Photo by Jim Bishop

who worked part-time in the school's print shop and did graphic design work for EMU.

Lee agreed to accompany Ted to Spruce Lake, where their performances met with enthusiastic response. "You guys must have worked together for a long time," many commented afterward. A friendship formed in the fall of 1987 and evolved into a dramatic partnership, Ted and Lee TheaterWorks. Their comedy sketches expanded to a full-length production, "The Armadillo Tour."

Their repertoire broadened to longer original works based on biblical characters and events, including "Fish-Eyes," a dramatic portrayal of two of Christ's disciples, Peter and Andrew, and "Creation Chronicles," a fresh look at stories in the Old Testament. They teamed up with actress Ingrid De Sanctis on a Christmas show she helped write called "DoveTale." Ingrid estimates that she has done at least 150 performances with Ted over the last 11 years.

"Ted and I have come to a really lovely place as friends and artists working together, like a brother-sister thing at times," she says. "We have a friendship that is hard earned. We are both sensitive and stubborn and like our own ideas, but that's what makes it work—we genuinely respect each other."

Ingrid says she is proud of Ted for moving and pushing and forcing through the loss, that grief. "Artistically, he exploded and created so many new shows and is continuing to redefine himself and the direction of his work. I love directing and working with new plays, and we've found a great rhythm in that regard.

At the time of Lee's death, the pair was involved in their biggest undertaking to date, "Good God Theater, Pts. 1 and 2," a 32-episode video and study series for Abingdon Press of the United Methodist Church. Some content was new, some based on earlier material. The project had high production values, according to Ted, and included a substantial investment of personal funds.

"Even though faced with a whole new set of issues and challenges, I still wanted to complete the project, which required recasting and rewriting some material," Ted says. Video shoots took place in Virginia in September and November of 2007. It wouldn't have been possible, he says, without the tireless assistance of Sue, Ingrid, who directed, and "a host of loving, giving performers and technicians."

Unfortunately, by the time the massive project was completed, the economy nationwide was sagging. Prospective audiences evaporated; only about 20 percent of sales projected by Abingdon have materialized to date.

"What I'd hoped would provide much of my retirement pension instead became a major financial setback," Ted says.

He credits his wife, Sue, a teacher at EMHS, and extended family on both sides with helping him survive, persevere and work at the healing process.

"Amid the grief and pain of recognizing that our lives were forever changed, I think I supported Ted best by taking care of myself," Sue says. "I read all the cards and notes that came to our house and appreciated visits from family and friends who came to check on us. Our small group and congregation, Community Mennonite Church, opened their ears and arms."

Sue continues: "You love by listening and showing patience, you put up with crazy schedules, you help with self-produced shows by selling tickets or merchandise, you often take a back seat, you make drastic changes with loss of income, and you trust that God will take what you give and multiply it for others."

Soon after Lee's death, Sue visited the Middle East, a trip that had been planned for months. While walking where Jesus walked, she says, "I realized that Ted and Lee's portrayals of biblical

While walking where Jesus walked, I realized that Ted and Lee's portrayals of biblical stories were exceptionally well done.—Sue Swartz stories were exceptionally well done. I was so grateful for their years of working together. That started my healing of the business loss. After returning, I read books on grief and took a master's level class at EMU, Self-Care and Renewal of the Teacher."

Ted and Sue attended a youth conference where, instead of performing, they were invited to come and be, with opportunity to talk and grieve together. A family meeting held at Christmas time with friend and counselor Nancy Good was a significant event in Ted's journey of healing, he says, as they laughed and cried together.

> I feel a lot of freedom as a solo writer and performer, and I believe some of my best material has evolved more recently.—Ted Swartz

Several months later, Ted helped Sue direct the senior class play, "To Kill a Mockingbird," at EMHS. The show was dedicated to Lee, who had played the role of Atticus as a high school senior there.

Following Lee's death, Ted worked feverishly on new material. He co-wrote four new shows in 2008-09, collaborating with fellow actor-writer-music colleagues, including "Tattered and Worn," an exploration of losing one's faith and finding it again with actor-pianist Jeff Raught of Talmage, Pa.; "Excellent Trouble," co-written with Ingrid De Sanctis, bringing biblical pairs to life with all their human joys and heartaches; and "What Would Lloyd Do?," drawing on the talents of free-lance actor-musician Trent Wagler of Harrisonburg and teacher-musician Jay Lapp of Ann Arbor, Mich. This show, also dramaturged by Ingrid, premiered at EMU's homecoming weekend, Oct. 10-11, 2008. Ted also rewrote "Jacob's Ladder," which calls on the improvisation talents of musician Ken Medema.

"I feel a lot of freedom as a solo writer and performer, and I believe some of my best material has evolved more recently," Ted says. "Lee's passing has fueled my work and gives it a new passion and life as a creative artist that will have a life beyond Lee. I still enjoy doing some of our older material, but the Ted & Lee brand is gone, and I needed to move on."

With new projects in the works, some things must end. Although scripts and videos for the Christmas play "DoveTale" are available, Ted, Trent and Ingrid performed the Christmas play for the last times Dec. 22-23 in the EMHS auditorium in Harrisonburg.

Ted & Company looks ahead

Ted is geared up—a "kickstart momentum," he calls it—to present nine new productions and a solo piece. But he wonders, "Can this structure we've put together be sustainable—professionally, financially, emotionally—in a difficult economic climate?

"I need to do 100-110 shows a year to make a living," Ted says matter-of-factly. "But I can't keep up the previous pace at this stage of life, and having incurred major debt doesn't help."

Ted is working with a consultant to develop a fresh marketing strategy and find the niche for his new material—what direction is appropriate when historically only about 10 percent of his work is at Mennonite Church USA-related venues. He is also experimenting with different options to replace the graphic look that Lee once handled for promotion, playbills and simple stage props.

Sue is optimistic about the direction of Ted & Company: "For a long time, it felt like wheels were spinning. We had heard that any trauma to

Through our editorial process, we introduced errors into the article "Whispers of Resurrection" by Isaac Villegas (March). The correct version is now available on our Web site: www.themennonite.org/issues/13-3/articles/Whispers_of_resurrection.

Ted and Lee in costume: In 2005, Ted and Lee appear at Community Mennonite Church's variety show as judges of the Sanhedrin, trying Peter and John after they healed a man. The piece, "Duly Noted and Recorded," was originally performed at the 2005 Mennonite Church USA Convention. Photo by Jim Bishop

Moving on: Ted Swartz at home in Harrisonburg, Va. Photo by Jim Bishop

business takes two years for recovery; we are closer to three," she says. "Many good things are happening: name, logo and Web site are in place, downloadables are available, new scripts are ready for publication, marketing and other roles in the company are better defined, and Ted is sighing less. I'm happy when he can concentrate on writing and performing, the things he does best."

Beyond Sue and extended family members, Ted credits Sheri Hartzler, the troupe's agent and manager for some 16 years, as an invaluable support throughout the readjustment process.

"The biggest adjustment was feeling a lot like we were starting over, only now it wasn't only name recognition but what shows to do," Sheri says. "The unsettled economy has directly affected the number of churches and other organizations that are able to book a show.

"I think progress and success for Ted & Company will occur as we seek to expand our marketing efforts, continuing to explore other options for performance, such as Ted's solo shows, workshops, spiritual life weeks and weekend retreat events—in other words, using past material in new ways, still trying to get it out into the world while promoting the new shows with other actors."

> As we make some changes in the business, in the shows, in the way we work and the people we work with, the laughter and the joy of the work is returning.
> —Sheri Hartzler

According to Sheri, "Fish-Eyes" was the most-booked in the past and remains the most-purchased script and video. All scripts and DVDs are readily available at www.tedandcompany.com/store.

For churches that feel pinched in the pocketbook, Sheri suggests that they consider working with other churches in their community to cosponser a show, find sponsors for the actual show fees, make tickets or offerings available for use for a local or church cause, or purchase script books or download scripts of an entire show (or individual scenes) and do their own performances. A click on "products" and a quick click on videos on the Web site provide the needed information at a glance.

"I invite persons to check with me on Ted & Company's upcoming schedule," Sheri says. "We may find a way to piggy-back on another performance and save some travel costs."

Ted is enthused about "I'd Like to Buy an Enemy," a one-hour show co-starring Trent Wagler that premiered at the Mennonite Church USA convention last July in Columbus, Ohio. "I think it will appeal to a broader audience," he says. The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at EMU sponsored a performance on March 22.

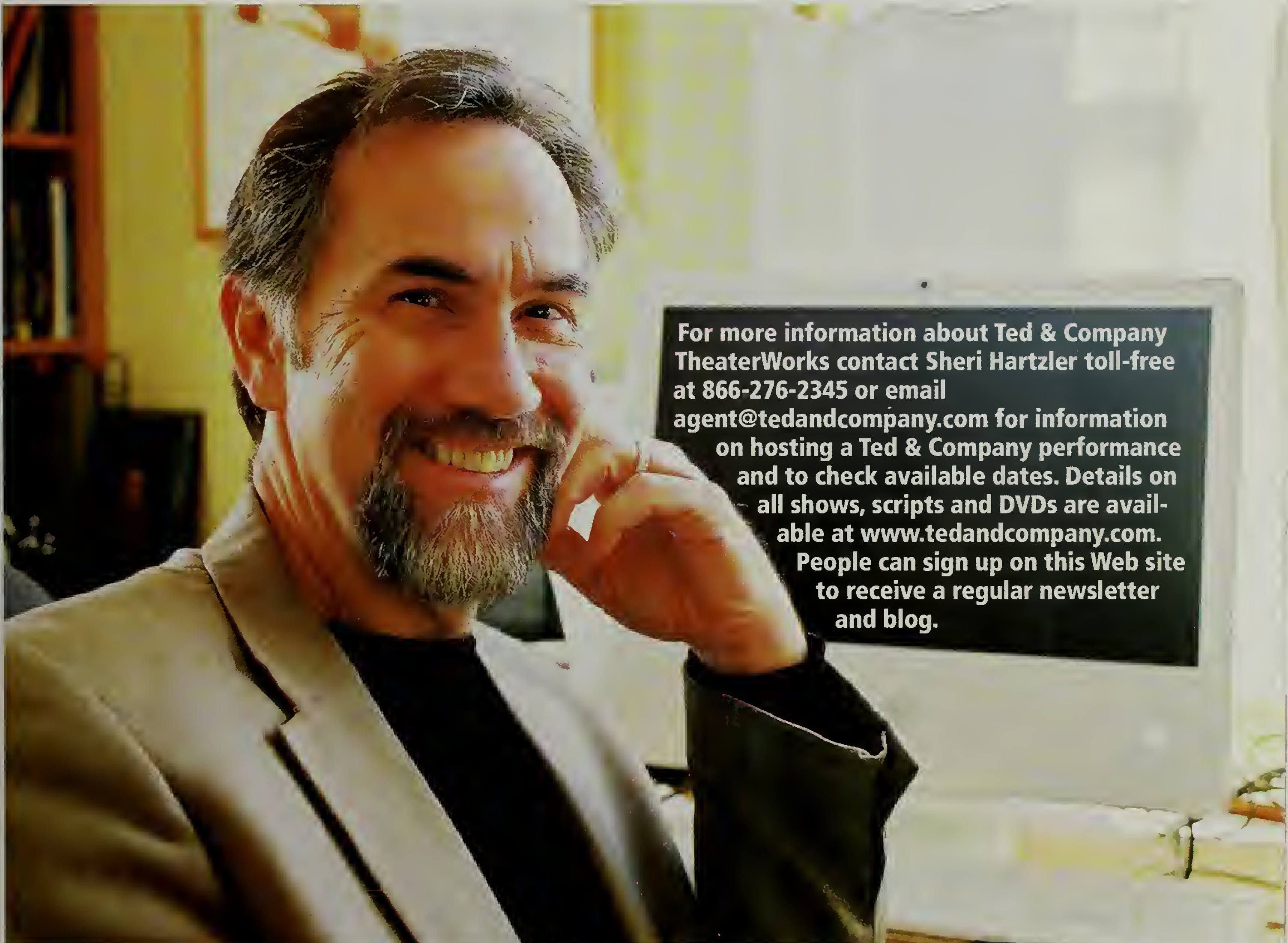
"Nothin' Funny 'Bout Money," another collaboration with Trent Wagler, weaves comedy and original music around the sensitive topic of finances and caring for God-given material possessions. He premiered a solo show on the Apostle Paul at a Catholic church in Cleveland. Another new work, "St. John's Revival and Music Review," is a stage play that functions like a radio program structured around a church service. Ted wants to turn "What Would Lloyd Do?" into a screenplay.

"When I started working with Ted and Lee, I often said they helped me learn to laugh," Sheri says. "When Lee died, the work became so overwhelming that laughter was no longer a priority. Now, as we make some changes in the business, in the shows, in the way we work and the people we work with, the laughter and the joy of the work is returning."

"I'm addicted to goose bumps and laughter," Ted says, "and I feel a spiritual calling to continue sharing these gifts with others."

Out of tragedy plus time, there is renewed hope, healing and laughter for Ted & Company.

Jim Bishop is public information officer at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and a member of Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, as is Ted Swartz.



For more information about Ted & Company TheaterWorks contact Sheri Hartzler toll-free at 866-276-2345 or email agent@tedandcompany.com for information on hosting a Ted & Company performance and to check available dates. Details on all shows, scripts and DVDs are available at www.tedandcompany.com. People can sign up on this Web site to receive a regular newsletter and blog.

A solo writer: Ted Swartz at home in Harrisonburg, Va. Photo by Jim Bishop

What do you think of when you hear the expression "Christian family"? It actually has two distinct meanings.

Practicing first family

by David A. Stevens

Reflections on Mark 3:19b-21; 31-35

When some people hear "Christian family," they think of having Christian parents and relatives, going to church together on Sunday mornings, sharing family devotions or service projects and growing up in a Christian home. For these people Christian family refers to Christians in families. For others, it means the church as family, something beyond our natural relatives. And you know which meaning is right. They both are.

But which understanding of family, does Jesus consider most important?

In Mark 3:19b-21; 31-35 we meet members of Jesus' biological family. His mother and siblings go out to where he is teaching in order to restrain him. People are starting to talk: "This guy's gone out of his mind, off the deep end." So Jesus' biological family comes to him to perform a well-known family function: to get one of their members back in line, one whose behavior is tarnishing the family name. There's a nail sticking up, and we've got to pound it down. Jesus can't seem to get a grip, so we'll get a grip on him. Sometimes that family function can turn into family dysfunction. But some measure of providing feedback and boundaries is a legitimate part of being family.

There's such a crowd around Jesus that his mother and siblings can't get close. So they send him a message that they want to speak with him. When he gets the message, Jesus says something surprising: "Who are my mother and my brothers? ... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." In response to his biological family, Jesus creates a whole new definition of family. Family is the new community of Jesus' followers; those who strive to do God's will are Jesus' family.

How do you suppose those people around Jesus that day would have reacted when he said his followers are his first family? They may well have been shocked. Kinship ties were at least as important in Jesus' day as they are now. Blood family was the primary building block of society, the primary group that formed one's identity, the primary group to which one owed loyalty—for the whole life span.

Are we a little shocked too? Don't we place a high value on biological family? Is it a little unsettling to hear Jesus place natural relatives in a position of lesser importance than our faith relatives?

Maybe this is just a unique, isolated text. Sorry. There's more. For example, Jesus and Paul both place marriage in a different perspective from what most of the church does today. Jesus and Paul affirm the sanctity of marriage. But they consider singleness the first choice of an adult Christian lifestyle. And singles often expand family to include nonrelatives. Have you ever heard the church putting that forth to young people, that singleness is to be preferred, that singleness is a great gift to the church? I know some wonderful parents who, from the time their child is small, start praying for that child's future spouse. The assumption is that that child's future is marriage. In 24 years of ministry, I've never heard of a single Christian parent praying for a son or daughter to choose the New Testament's preferred lifestyle of singleness. I know many young people who, when they reach a certain age, if they're not married, think they must be part of the Left Behind series. But Jesus and Paul teach and model that singleness is a tremendous gift to the church. It's not only the peace and justice values of the Bible that challenge our culture; it's the family values, too.

Family is the new community of Jesus' followers; those who strive to do God's will are Jesus' family.

Don't misunderstand. Jesus is not antibiological family. To Jesus, biological family is the second most important family we have.

We can also consider 2 Timothy 1. Paul speaks to Christians in families. Paul acknowledges the importance of Timothy's biological grandmother Lois and mother Eunice in the development of Timothy's faith. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul calls on natural sons and daughters to take care of their own widowed mothers. But later in that same chapter, Paul also speaks to Christians as family. Paul says for a widow who has no children, the church is to be her family and to be as responsible for her as if she was a biological parent. Jesus himself practiced this kind of first family. On the cross, Jesus asked a "beloved disciple" to take care of his mother and make her part of his own family. Christians in families are important but Christians as family is even more important.

For the first few centuries, churches met in homes. In Acts 16, an out-of-town businesswoman named Lydia listens to Paul's message. She accepts Christ and is baptized. She immediately invites Paul and his companions to stay at her house. By the end of Acts 16 it's clear that a brand new Christian fellowship has begun meeting in Lydia's home, and Paul goes there to encourage "the brothers and sisters" (Acts 16:40). In the church, "water is thicker than blood." The waters of Christian baptism initiate us into Jesus' new definition of family.

The hospitality of Christians in families is a tremendous partnership in God's mission of creating Christians as family.

But it is the tiny book of Philemon that shows us the most radical implications of practicing first family. While Paul is under arrest, a slave named Onesimus comes to him. Onesimus is owned by one Philemon, a friend of Paul's. Paul writes to Philemon on behalf of the slave. He calls on the master to receive the slave back favorably, since, in the Lord, their relationship can no longer be defined merely as master and slave; they have become Christian brothers.

Can you imagine? That family language of equals, "brothers," applied to a Christian master and slave, that revolutionary leveling of relationships was destined to one day make slavery unacceptable in the church.

American Christianity has provided an enormous amount of speaking and writing and counseling and conferences and film production in order to strengthen the biological Christian family. And much good has come from it. But almost none of it has taken account of where Jesus himself puts the emphasis. Jesus' focus on the family is not so much Christians in families as it is Christians as family. What would happen if the church started putting as much energy into becoming a non-relative family as it has into being families of relatives? What would such a church look like and feel like?

The truth is we are already doing some of that. At child dedications, when we dedicate ourselves to young children, all of us together pledge our responsibility to that child's upbringing. We are dedicating ourselves to be that child and her parents' family. We are also obeying Jesus' understanding of family when we practice ministries of nursery and mentoring and teaching and mutual aid and shared decision-making.

It's no accident that the church in the New Testament calls its members "adelphoi"—brothers and sisters. It's no accident that from their beginnings, the Anabaptists called themselves "brothers and sisters"—even the husbands and wives. In Christ, water is thicker than blood. In Christ, the church has become the primary family unit. In the church, there's a whole new meaning to mothering and fathering and grandparenting.

And that's good because there's a tremendous need around us: We have young adults in our communities who have never been parented. Maybe the parents weren't there, maybe they were preoccupied. Maybe the parents had never grown up from being kids themselves. We have a tremendous opportunity to practice first family to people who have never really known a family.

In their farewell message, a wise pastoral couple told their congregation: "You have strong families in this church. These strong families can be fortresses or they can be oases. We encourage you not to use your families as an end but as a means, as partners with Christ in creating belonging beyond biology." Their encouragement applies to all of us. The hospitality of Christians in families is a tremendous partnership in God's mission of creating Christians as family.

What will our children learn from us about Christian family? Hopefully they will learn that Christians in families nurture our faith. We live and serve the Lord together. Hopefully they will also learn that family is a verb; that family is something we do. Christians as family means ever expanding relationships in the mission of God, a home without boundaries that comes from inviting others in.

David A. Stevens is pastor of Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Veiled and free

by Esther Stenson

The young woman washing her hands beside me in the rest stop bathroom asked, "Do you know Jesus?" Her abrupt question surprised me. She continued, "Are you born again?" and barely listened as I found my voice and assured her I did and I was. She continued pressing me with questions as I searched my mind for the reason she zeroed in on me like that. Evidently the fact that I was wearing a veiling symbolized "Amish" and spiritual darkness to her.

People in various cultures/religions still wear head coverings and should be respected in spite of the reality that many deny the relevance of this practice.

I forced myself not to laugh in her face. What signified good "Christian" behavior in my community of birth represented something "other" to her in her cultural ignorance.

Another time, I was riding a crowded ferry across Hong Kong harbor when I was approached by a sharp-looking young man who pressed a flyer into my hand. I suspected he was selling something, but I found it strange that he should target me alone and not the other expatriate English teachers on the seat beside me. After he retreated, I glanced at the print only to find a lengthy argument against the worship of Mary. Suddenly I got it. I was the only one in the group wearing a veiling and obviously looked Catholic to some observers, although I am Mennonite.

I disagree with those who assert that veilings are nothing but symbols of bondage and subservience.

I grew up, like most Amish Mennonites, believing the wearing of a veiling a nonnegotiable command in Scripture (1 Corinthians 11) that is somehow disconnected from cultural context. Since the Bible teaches the practice, women should do it—no questions permitted. Church authorities interpreted women's wearing of a veiling as a requirement for coming into God's presence in prayer and a sign of acceptance of God's order of creation (in terms of gender). Additionally, the idea that women were to have a symbol of authority on our heads "because of the angels" (v. 10) meant that if we wanted their protection, we'd better be veiled.

Although I was taught when I was growing up in the 1960s that the veiling provided protection for young Christian women, that assertion was blown to bits when an acquaintance of mine, a conservative Mennonite who always wore a veiling, was followed home from work by a stranger and raped. This upstanding young woman from a small rural Mennonite community had not knowingly put herself in harm's way but was simply taken advantage of when she was alone and in a vulnerable position. While this is one example that is contrary to the myth, I cannot say that other young women were not spared being raped because they were wearing a veiling. Those stories are also a part of the mythology I grew up with.

So why am I resurrecting this issue of the veil when many Mennonites have given up the practice and rarely talk about it anymore except in reference to the Mennonite dark ages? I do so because I still live in a world between the veiled and unveiled. Not only do my mother, sister and other family members still value the wearing of a veil but I teach Muslim students in my university classes, some of whom are veiled. I still wear the veiling selectively, and some observers may think I am a religious schizophrenic.

I ask myself what the veiling symbolizes for me now. For one, I disagree with those who assert that veilings are nothing but symbols of bondage and subservience. I have known plenty of veiled Mennonites who are every bit as happy and free within their domains as are those who are not veiled and must operate within the confines of difficult work situations. Going outside the Mennonite tradition, let me give further illustrations of those who happily wear a head covering.

A young Muslim woman in my class says wearing her hijab gives her a feeling of freedom and rightness with God—especially when she prays. She feels more comfortable and at ease within the given structure of her religious practice than were she to discard her veiling and live without boundaries. She also finds freedom in not having to worry or think about how to fix her hair. Protection from unwanted male harassment is another positive aspect she notes for wearing a veiling. These justifications are not unlike those given traditionally among Mennonites.

Zainab Chami, a Lebanese American woman, says: "if I decided not to wear [the hijab] because of society, that would be oppression. ... It makes me think of who I am, it reminds me of God, and it keeps me rooted. ... For me the hijab is not a constraint; it's the ultimate sign of liberation."

Similarly, Rajdeep Singh Jolly, writing in the *Washington Post* (April 5, 2009) in response to a critic, states: "For observant Sikhs, tying a turban is neither a ritual nor a sign of extremism; it is a declaration of Sikh identity and signifies commitment to the Sikh principles of justice and universal equality. The turban distinguishes a Sikh as an ambassador of his or her faith and is a source of strength and pride for millions." He further makes the point that tying a turban is no more bothersome or time-consuming than many American cultural rituals such as shaving a beard or waxing one's legs.

Whatever significance a person gives this symbol within a given cultural context is what makes the practice either meaningful or not.

Here we have examples of individuals of other cultures or religions who have a commitment to and respect for their religious practices. These folks are not a small minority in the world and, like some veil-wearing Mennonites, are often maligned and misunderstood within secular settings, both in this country and in other places. Like Mennonites, they sometimes find intolerance among "outsiders" as well as among variants of their own primary religion.

Perhaps it is because I identify with some of the values these people hold that I am as yet unwilling to completely set aside my own practice of wearing the veiling. I recognize that as a state university instructor sprung from Amish Mennonite roots, I hold a liminal position in a world that is becoming increasingly secular and fragmented. I work with others who likewise have been uprooted and now live among people with values contrary to their own. Sometimes I, like them, experience feelings of being a cultural refugee, and sometimes I also want to be reminded of where I came from—from roots that are as valid and good as any.

I do not know if I will always continue my irregular habit of wearing the veiling, but I believe that whatever significance a person gives this symbol within a given cultural context is what makes the practice either meaningful or not. I hope that at least I will always extend my respect to those who wear a veiling, or don't wear it, for whatever reason or whatever occasion—that I will extend to others the freedom God has so generously given to me.

Esther Stenson is a member of Community Mennonite in Harrisonburg, Va.

Dreamstime.com

Learning to fly

by Mayeken Kehr

At my house, just outside the window of our bathroom, grows a thin tree. It's small and at first sight appears to be nothing more than a glorified bush. But perhaps because of its simple nature, this tree provides the perfect place to build a structure of support: a nest. For some reason birds love this tree; they love to make it their home. Occasionally, I see the birds at work.

They carefully weave together twigs, bits of trash and other plants in anticipation of new birth.

God does not nurture our faith so that we can stay within safe boundaries.

When I came home from college last May, I saw that the nest was not only constructed but was full. Inside several tiny eggs, baby robins were resting safely under a parent's wings, waiting to burst from their shells into the bright but intimidating light of new life.

I grew up in a sturdy nest and am grateful for that stability. In a fractured world, I was born into a loving, intact family. I was born into the church—a body of people who sought the face of God together in worship, community and acts of justice. I was born into a tradition—named Mayeken for a 16th-century Anabaptist martyr, I carry a story of fierce faith in my name.

This nest allows me to relate to Timothy, the wide-eyed, budding pastor whom Paul addresses in his letter. It seems Timothy's heritage was also one of great faith. Timothy not only traveled with and learned from the apostle Paul but was a third-generation Christian. He grew up in a sturdy nest. Paul praises God for the faith that lived in Timothy's grandmother Lois, his mother Eunice and that now resides in Timothy. And this is praiseworthy.

How wonderful for families to become an instrument of God! How much joy Lois and Eunice must have felt to be able to share in the good news with Timothy, to worship together as another family—that of Christ! How much joy God must feel to see different generations worshiping together through corporate and individual expressions of faith!

God's joy lives in the questions generations continually ask. With energy and excitement God's people wonder, How can we pass on the words of faith to which we've been entrusted? How will we nurture the next generation? These are dynamic questions to which Paul's second letter to Timothy may offer some guidance.

Most importantly, Paul does not want us to forget who is the mama bird, the master weaver and the divine planner of this nest: God. In this metaphor, it's easy for me to place my parents in the role of mother or father bird. It seems natural; they are the most physical representation for me of love, comfort, stability and Christ followers. But really, my parents, the church, my experiences are all twigs and materials; they surround me with protection and the example of a sturdy faith, but ultimately it is God who has pieced together and holds together these things in my life. God is the continuity that carries through generations. The grace we receive is not a sign of our parents' faithfulness but the faithfulness of Jesus Christ even to the cross.

Paul makes this clear: We do not choose Christ by default. We do not have faith unless it is our own. Paul writes to Timothy, grateful for the example of faith modeled by the women in his life but even more thankful for Timothy's ownership of that faith. In his letter to Timothy, Paul writes, "I am reminded of your sincere faith." This faith is Timothy's, not his grandmother's or his mother's. Paul encourages Timothy to stand firm in this conviction, to say unashamedly that this faith, the foolishness of the cross, is his own.

How does this appropriation of faith happen? I was born into a nest that proclaimed a strong faith in Jesus Christ, but I was not born into faith. That birth happened later. I liken my story of ownership to that of a baby bird upon hatching. Inside the shell of my safe life, I was warm, comfortable and naive. Outside was not very comfortable.

It was only then, after I had known darkness, that I could appreciate the Light.

During my freshman year of high school one of my close friends was diagnosed with cancer. For the next two years she went through treatments of chemotherapy and radiation, swinging between joyous periods of remission and the dreaded discoveries of yet another tumor. I was 16 on March 1, 2005, when, gathered together with classmates, I heard that she was dead.

This experience brought an intense anger that is still hard to articulate. It was more than sorrow—I was angry with God. I wanted nothing to do with God. When I followed my parents to church, I wondered, Why pray? My pain was raw and my skepticism deep.

But slowly God nursed me back to life. Slowly and tenderly God tended my wounds, despite my resistance. It was only then, after I had known darkness, that I could appreciate the Light. It was only after knowing what it was to be without God that I could appreciate the presence of God. It was then that my faith began to become my own.

My introduction to suffering and the subsequent act of owning my faith is significant in my spiritual journey. When asked to share a reflection from my spiritual journey, this is usually the one I tell. But I cannot live in reflections; Paul reminds us there is much more after ownership.

A few weeks after first taking notice of the eggs outside our window, I was surprised to find that the nest was full of life. Little robins sat eagerly, continually focused upward, waiting for a parent to drop a bit of sustenance into their tiny beaks. I saw this feeding take place, and it was incredible. To see the life and growth of what had just broken free from its shell—it's a small splendor you want to share with others. But in a few more weeks, again to my surprise, the nest was empty. I had almost forgotten that a bird's purpose is to fly. Although grounded at times, they aren't meant to stay in the nest.

God calls each of us to something dangerously holy and equips us for that purpose.

Paul says that God not only saves us but calls us to a holy calling. We are called not only to own the great news of Christ Jesus but to live by and testify to the reason for our hope. God does not nurture our faith so that we can stay within safe boundaries. No, God calls each of us to something dangerously holy and equips us for that purpose.

Paul knew this all too well. He knew it in his own calling—he was "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (2 Timothy 1:1). God's will led Paul to travel, preach and suffer for the sake of one very-much-alive Jesus Christ. Paul saw that same call alive in Timothy, and he says we are all called by the power of God. Paul reminds Timothy and us to "fan into flame" or "rekindle the gift of God" within us (2 Timothy 1:6).

Imagine that. The power of God plus us plus fire—the prospect sounds dangerous and unsettling. But maybe that is how it is supposed to be. To rekindle a fire we need to disturb and disrupt the coals. Maybe we need to be unsettled to enliven the gifts within us. In fact, Paul promises we will be uncomfortable; we will suffer. It takes courage to disrupt our comfortable kindling. It takes courage to fan into flame our gifts when

we know that God's will is involved. It is not a safe calling.

But, says Paul, "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline" (1:7). We are not ashamed of the fire we carry but are called to lovingly tend it and offer its blazing power and comforting warmth to others.

For me, it is much easier to be a coward and stay within the nest where it's safe. Within the nest—my family, friends and church—sharing and nurturing faith seems easy. But outside that fortress? Beyond the nest where I need to take risks to proclaim my faith in Christ Jesus? Where I risk being rejected, being labeled and degraded by intellectuals as naive or lumped together with a mainstream and political form of Christianity? That's much scarier.

Fortunately, God equips us with an alternative to a spirit of cowardice: the Spirit of power, love and a sound mind.

Of what then, do we have to be afraid? Death, our greatest enemy? Not even death, says Paul. Because our Savior Christ Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Because God's history is one of unending provisions and faithfulness, we have no reason to be ashamed of our faith, only our cowardice. That's why this verse is so wonderfully disturbing. We are not called to be cowards. What I often mistake for arrogance in Paul's writings may simply be an unashamed and unabashed testimony to the one in whom Paul has put his trust and life.

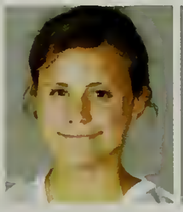
Unfortunately, it is not only fear that can keep us from flying. If we want to fly perfectly on the first try, it's hard to leave the nest. For me it's always tempting to get caught up in self-perfection instead of realizing that I am gradually being perfected by God. Instead of soaring with trust on the wild winds of grace, I choose to be tied down by self-inflicted toil toward unattainable sinlessness.

Paul reminds us that this attempt is fruitless. We were saved and called by God, "not according to our works but according to God's own purpose and grace" (1:9). God does not ask us to earn the grace we have received, just to not be ashamed of it. And how can we keep it a secret? If we are integrated in Christ, if we fan into flame the gifts of the Spirit, we cannot help but share the Good News with others. We cannot help but pass on the faith. We have chosen Christ, who gives us this irresistible longing—we cannot help but follow him. We cannot help but leave the safety of our own nests to build up others.

We still rejoice and give thanks for the nest—for the sound teachings that nurture us through faith and love in Christ Jesus. We need the nest, but the nest is not our treasure. Christ is our good treasure. God has entrusted us with the Good News and told us to guard it. But to guard the gospel does not mean to bury it like some unused talent. We guard it by courageously spreading the deep joy of this treasure. We protect it by entrusting it to others who are willing to make it their own. We guard it as a sacred calling to pass on our heritage of faith.

If we are integrated in Christ, if we fan into flame the gifts of the Spirit, we cannot help but share the Good News with others.

Our very lives attest to this heritage because what we guard also guards us and our actions. We not only seek to pass on but to live by God's presence in Scripture, tradition, innovation, silence and each other. With the help of the Holy Spirit living in us, we are equipped to live out this calling. We can pass on the faith and be courageous. We can move beyond the safety of our nests to come proudly to God's table, confessing that our faith is our own. We come secure in the bone-deep knowledge that the wind that carries us—although wild and unpredictable—is God's own Spirit of self-discipline, power and love. Praise be to God.



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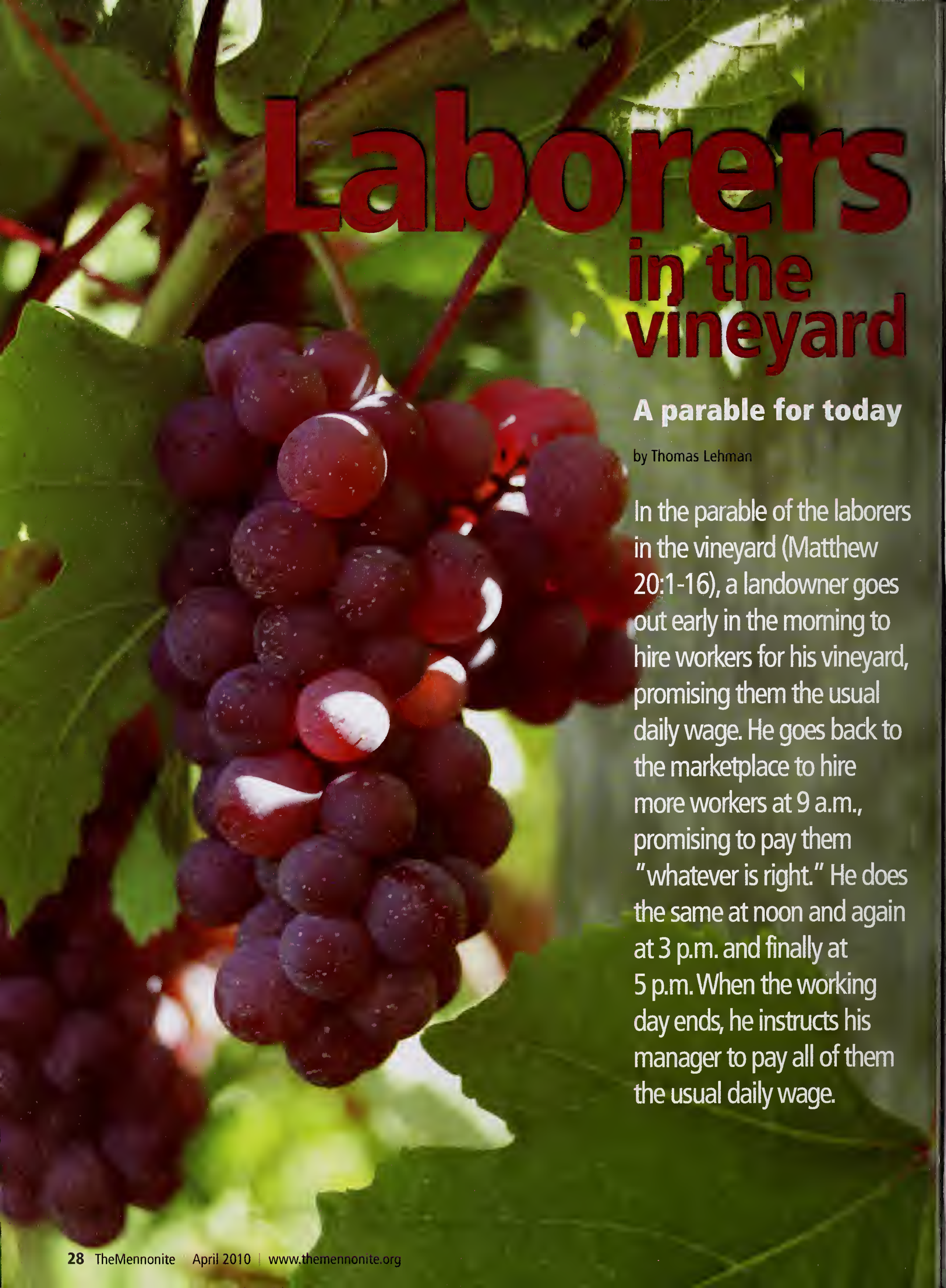
Elaine Wilson | wikimedia.com



Laborers in the vineyard

A parable for today

by Thomas Lehman

In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), a landowner goes out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard, promising them the usual daily wage. He goes back to the marketplace to hire more workers at 9 a.m., promising to pay them "whatever is right." He does the same at noon and again at 3 p.m. and finally at 5 p.m. When the working day ends, he instructs his manager to pay all of them the usual daily wage.

The workers who had put in a full day grumbled against the landowner, who replies, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. … Or are you envious because I am generous?"

The moral of the parable is simple: The generous landowner assumes that all his workers have similar basic needs, and all should go home with enough at the end of the day to feed their families. The parable shows that God's sense of economic justice is far superior to ours in its insistence on meeting basic human needs from day to day.

Matthew 5:45 tells us that our Father in heaven "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous." Here we see as well that divine justice includes a measure of generosity.

When humans run things, it is possible to insure that basic needs go unmet. The current poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the contiguous 48 states (Alaska and Hawaii are higher) define poverty for a two-person household as an income of less than $14,000, and for a household of four, $21,200.

In July 2008, Michael Bloomberg, New York City's mayor, raised the poverty guideline for a family of four living in the city to $26,138. This apparent generosity needs to be placed in context: In Manhattan the average income of the wealthiest fifth of the population is 50 times as great as the average income of the bottom fifth.

The federal minimum wage recently advanced to $6.55/hour. An employee who works 2,000 hours per year at the federal minimum has a gross annual income of $13,100, a mere 62 percent of the poverty guideline for a family of four. Do the bureaucrats who define the poverty threshold and the legislators who set the minimum wage ever talk to each other? Do they even inhabit the same country? This kind of hypocrisy has been national policy for many years.

In Canada, the minimum wage is set by the respective provinces; the overall average is $8.40.

In *Unexpected News*, Robert McAfee Brown discussed the famous passage in Matthew 25 in which Jesus presides over all of human history on judgment day and asks who gave food to the hungry, a drink to the thirsty, who welcomed a stranger or gave clothing to the naked. Brown sums it up in these words: "Giving food to the hungry or clothing to the naked is not a charitable handout but an exercise in simple justice—restoring to the poor what is rightfully theirs, what has been taken from them unjustly. So Jesus' vision is not a plea for tax-deductible donations but a fervent cry for justice, for setting right what has gone wrong." In light of this country's longstanding failure to pay an adequate minimum wage, we need not look far to see who has been unjustly treated and realize that much of what we buy is the work of underpaid laborers.

Our nation's economy offers unlimited wealth to those who can achieve it and unending poverty to those trapped in it.

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard shows that, in contrast to the financial bailout engineered by the U.S. government, in God's economy the concern starts at the bottom by first meeting the daily needs of the least among us. It is a truly radical economy and quite the opposite of practice in the United States.

Our nation's economy offers unlimited wealth to those who can achieve it and unending poverty to those trapped in it. Though people differ greatly in their ability to earn a living, Christians can never cite this to excuse a lack of concern.

The United States has redefined but not abandoned the concept of slavery if we institutionalize economic servitude by paying a poverty-level minimum wage. To enjoy great prosperity when it is based on the sacrificial labors of chronically underpaid and often overworked people is to ignore the lessons of this parable in particular as well as the general concern for the poor in both Old and New Testaments. The Bible gives the wealthy nowhere to hide.

Thomas Lehman is a member of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

As my friend rehearsed for me what she planned to say to her husband, I could see myself in her manner. She built her case, presented her view and left no clever phrase unsaid. She raised her voice to emphasize her point, lowered her voice to appear agreeable and paused dramatically when nothing else worked. Speaking to myself as much to her, I asked, "How about if you say it short, grin and be quiet? Then let him think about it."

Like my friend, I have for years presented my ideas to anyone who would listen with a song, a dance and some snazzy flair. But I've concluded that this approach reveals my lack of trust in God and failure to love others. I've asked God to help me develop a less-is-more way of speaking. ▮

Simply put

by Jan Johnson

When fewer words mean more

Keep it simple: We often use words to get our way. Without realizing it, we dominate conversations by interrupting and exaggerating. We think we're right, and we want others to share our beliefs or accept our advice. Other times we're concerned about our reputation so we rattle on to defend ourselves.

In Jesus' day, "evasive swearing" was common. As long as people avoided swearing by God's name (instead by heaven, the earth, Jerusalem or even their own head), they could say anything and not mean it. This allowed them to impress others while being insincere. In contrast to their showy speech—and ours—Jesus' instructions sound radical to a world that routinely speaks in italics: "Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'" (See Matthew 5:33-37.)

Taking our words to heart: Jesus' teaching hints at our need to examine the motives behind our words. Since most of us are concerned about what others think, we use words to make a good impression. Knowing this helps us recognize when it might be best to remain silent.

Some time ago, some people I was serving with asked if I planned to attend a concert they were giving the next evening. I smiled and said no. I decided not to give my reason (I'd been traveling a lot and was reserving the next day for a sabbath) because if I explained myself, I would probably sound as if I were lecturing them about practicing a sabbath. I smiled again and asked them to tell me about their plans—which they loved doing. Less really was more.

True simplicity of speech flows from a heart filled with the compassion, truth and love of Jesus: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). As my heart mirrors the heart of Christ—caring for others, trusting God with my reputation, abandoning my desire to have my way—my heart will direct my mouth to state an idea briefly and peacefully and then allow others full freedom to respond.

Speech therapy: Certain practices help us shift our conversations away from self and allow God to retrain us in speaking simply. They grow our confidence that God will work in our conversations without our over-the-top efforts. Here are a few practices to consider:

Silence. Times of silence retrain our mouths and quiet our compulsions to impress others through our words. We are relieved of the burden of making small talk. We may even journal about how we use speech to try to adjust others' opinions of ourselves.

Following the example of a friend, I've attempted to practice the situational silence of not not giving my opinion unless asked. As I was teaching several nights at a church, I discovered the pastor's daughter was a painter. Since art history is my hobby, I could not resist asking her who her favorite painter was. Even before she replied, I realized I was not listening for her answer. I asked her only because I wanted her to ask me that question. Recalling my intention not to offer my thoughts until asked, I disciplined myself to listen to her fully.

After she responded, she didn't ask my opinion. So I asked her more questions. As she spilled out her thoughts, she became dear to me. I wondered with joy at the person God put in my life. I almost missed that moment of connection in my hurry to offer my opinion.

Silence retrains our mouths and quiets our compulsions to impress others through our words.

Confession. As we become more conscious of our showy speech, we can then ask ourselves what's behind our words—self-importance? pushiness? disregard for the other person? After admitting this, we can ask God to help us plan the next step. For example, putting my hand over my mouth when I want to interrupt.

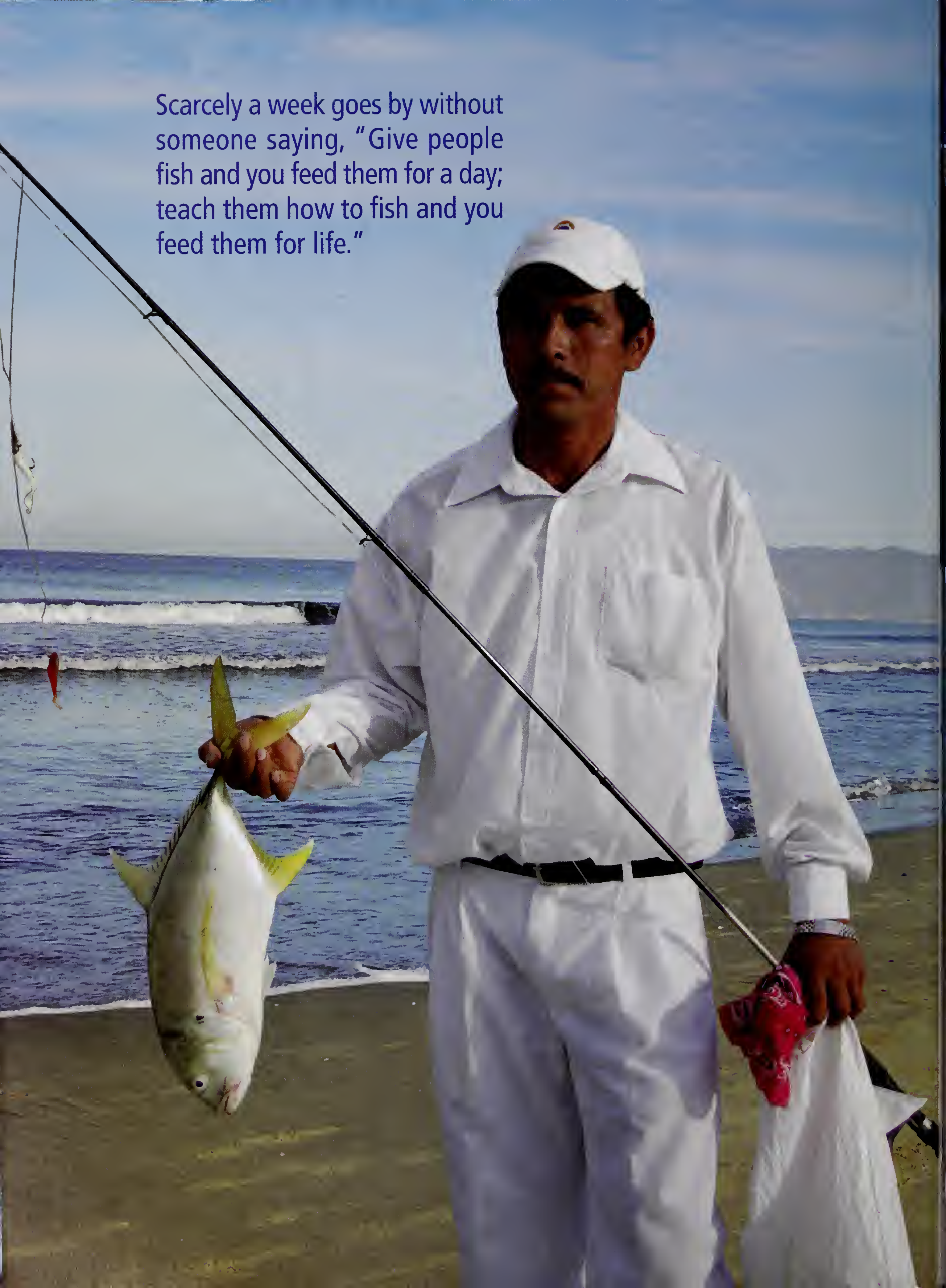
Attentiveness. Try waiting for an answer after asking others, "How are you?" If we truly listen, their answer will probably prod us to inquire further about them. Try answering questions with a simple yes or no. You won't come across as uncommunicative if you also smile to let the person know you're eager to be attentive.

When speaking with others, ask yourself, How can I love the people around me and hear their deeper selves in this moment? State your ideas briefly and instead of thinking about what you're going to say next, look at the people you're talking with and consider what they're saying.

As we allow the practices of simple speech to retrain our hearts and mouths, we too will become the kind of people who see the hearts of others more easily. What a rich way to live!

Jan Johnson is a speaker and the author of Invitation to the Jesus Life: Experiments in Christlikeness, *from which this article is adapted (www.janjohnson.org).*

Scarcely a week goes by without someone saying, "Give people fish and you feed them for a day; teach them how to fish and you feed them for life."



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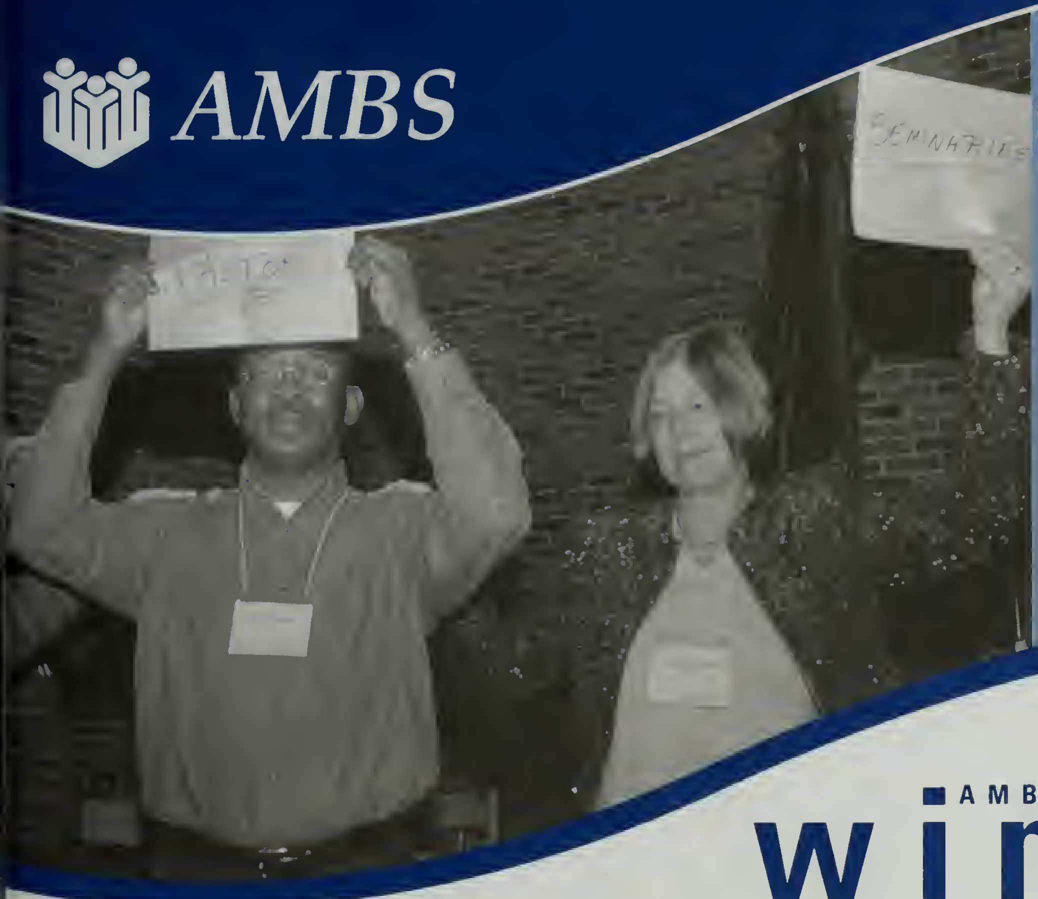

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Spring 2010
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AMBS window

Sustaining strong and vibrant congregations

Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, associate dean for leadership education

"*Engaging Pastors will transform seminary-church connections through sustained interaction between professors and pastors. Our learnings will feed into our formation of pastors and serve as a primary vehicle for AMBS strategic planning even as we support the ecology of ministry.*"

This bold claim served as the mission statement for the Engaging Pastors project, which AMBS coordinated from 2005 through 2009.

Lilly Endowment, whose grant funded the program, emphasized that strong and vibrant congregations need:

- high quality pastoral leadership
- theological education
- a *network of institutions* that must work collaboratively in addressing challenges and in maintaining strong and vibrant religious communities, including congregations, regional and national judicatories, colleges and universities, seminaries, independent agencies, retreat and conference centers, publishers and other supporting organizations.

This **network** is the "ecology of ministry."

Engaging Pastors created time and space for sustained conversations about ministry so that people from different points in the network—pastors, professors and area church, conference and denominational leaders—could learn and benefit from these exchanges, and so they could begin to imagine new ways of working collaboratively.

When we established the program we decided to build in a lot of entry points, so we had ten separate programs within the larger Engaging Pastors grant.

Over the last five years after each "engagement," we received reports from participants. As someone who is charged with reading all these reports, I assure you that it is almost mind-boggling how many of these pastor-professor conversations occurred, and I can attest to the transformative power of these conversations for both professors and pastors.

Others also read the reports, looking for recurring questions and issues, and three themes emerged. (See page 2) The Summative Conference, December 1 to 3, gave us an opportunity to test these and explore them further with pastors, denominational leaders, leaders of regional conferences and area churches, and educators from Mennonite ministry and theological schools.

We brought together representatives of each sector of the church charged with preparing and sustaining pastors—denominations, schools, and congregations. We discovered that our learnings from Engaging Pastors resonated with these leaders but that more conversation is needed to move forward. Although the grant period is over, I pray that the conversations will continue for the sake of sustaining strong and vital congregations. ●

AMBS Window is a publication of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary ~ www.ambs.edu

Engaging Pastors: What we learned

Dorothy Nickel Friesen

In the opportunities I had to meet with professors and other pastors through the Engaging Pastors program over the last five years, I discovered that both pastors and professors were surprised to discover all kinds of things.

We love our congregations! We were surprised to articulate so easily that most of us truly love our work and our small part in the larger picture of discipleship, faith formation and experiencing the closeness of the reign of God.

Professors were startled at how important they were to forming pastors. The reality that AMBS grads (in this case) were now lifelong friends was matched only by remembering classes, worship in the chapel, spiritual direction and faith-shaped classes and prayers that stayed with them. In short, the person of the professor and the person of the pastor have an impact on each other's lives in ways we had not articulated.

We found out how narrow our contexts are. Professors saw how Anglo they were when faced with the Seminario Bíblico Anabautista in Dallas. What micro-world was imagined when teaching a routine class in Elkhart? What good was AMBS to an immigrant, undocumented Hispanic pastor in Dallas?

We were surprised how easily we learned from each other, how thirsty we were for each other's passion for Jesus Christ, how much we looked to the same Bible for guidance, how much we loved to talk with each other.

We were surprised by each other's loneliness. No one prepared us for those first years in ministry—alone, isolated—with few peers to have discussions with. How much we missed the classroom in spite of the grumbling about heavy reading loads and endless reflection papers and long class periods. And no one told professors that they would study by themselves a lot and would counsel individual students a lot and would feel they were teaching in isolation often convinced that their discipline was the most critical for the students.

We were surprised that no structures exist for regular conversation between academy and judicatory. There are no formal exchanges, no structures, and little encouragement to become engaged. We are all wandering students, full of expertise, but we do not find a classroom where we sit down together.

Conclusion: For the sake of the church, let's engage professor and pastor. For the sake of the God's mission in the world, let's continue to not just talk but let's create new ways to call leaders, new ways to form leaders, and new ways to be leaders. It's a surprising time that we just might be the ones to shape a new generation of Mennonite leaders.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is conference minister for Western District Conference. She also has been a pastor and associate dean of AMBS. She is with Joel Miller, pastor of Cincinnati (Ohio) Mennonite Fellowship, in the photo at left. ●

On the front page: Samuel Olarewaju, pastor of Berean Fellowship Church, Youngstown, Ohio, represented a missional pastor surrounded by church agencies and organizations that support him. Gayle Gerber Koontz represented seminaries, and others in their small working group took the roles of conferences and area churches. In this final activity of the Engaging Pastors Summative Conference, each working group illustrated some aspect of support for pastors and congregations in the ecology of ministry.

Engaging Pastors key learnings

Engaging Pastors provided opportunities for sustained conversation and collaboration among AMBS faculty, pastors and denominational, conference and area church leaders. From these experiences over the last five years, several common learnings emerged:

- **Key learning 1:** The practice and teaching of ministry is strengthened when pastors and professors regularly engage each other;
- **Key learning 2:** There is an urgent need to strengthen pastoral, biblical and teaching authority in the church;
- **Key learning 3:** The church and seminary need to equip pastors and professors to read and engage their missional contexts with joy.

To see more about Engaging Pastors, visit the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/engagingpastors
Follow the link to the Engaging Pastors blog for reflections from participants about these three themes.

Key learnings affirmed but further discussion is needed

Megan Ramer, a member of the Summative Conference Listening Committee and pastor of Chicago (Ill.) Community Mennonite Church, observed that each of the three key learnings (see page 2) names a breach in the ecology of ministry. "The first learning identifies a disconnect between the academy and the church. The second learning identifies a disconnect between pastor and church—the church at all levels, but particularly the congregation. Learning three identifies a disconnect between the academy, church and pastors, and missional contexts."

The listening committee also included Noel Santiago, executive minister for Franconia Mennonite Conference; Jack Suderman, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada; and Sara Wenger Shenk, acting dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary and president-elect of AMBS. They concluded that the key learnings were affirmed by participants of the Summative Conference, but the second learning needs more clarification and discussion.

Key learning 1

The listening committee heard a strong "yes." They noted several themes emerging from working groups: 1) the critical role of conference and area church ministers in bridging the gap between pastors and professors; 2) the importance of the first five years of ministry for continued formation and learning; and 3) the need for substantive, ongoing support and mentoring for pastors.

Key learning 2

This learning garnered much less consensus, with more nuanced support. There was ambiguity about what the statement means and ambivalence about the notion of authority itself. "What *is* urgent is that we don't have a common understanding of authority and the multiple dimensions of authority," the listening committee said. "Engagement with this learning has the most potential for substantive change; this one goes to the heart of the matter."

Key learning 3

Missional engagement and joy feed each other, some participants noted. Themes from working groups included: 1) the importance of looking at the ecology of ministry comprehensively, including parts that weren't represented, such as Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Economic Development Associates and interim pastors; 2) we need leaders (conference and area church ministers, professors) who are *missional* leaders. The committee suggested, "Let's be willing to make new mistakes in going forward. Might we place higher value on creativity, innovation and risk, rather than success in forming good leaders?" ●

Top: Cyneatha Millsaps, pastor of Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., and Don Yoder, director of admissions, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, participated in one of 16 working groups that met multiple times during the conference to grapple with issues raised by the key learnings.

Bottom: Brenda Hostetler Meyer, pastor of Benton Mennonite Church near Goshen, Ind.; John Rempel, AMBS professor; and Jerry Buhler, area church minister for Saskatchewan, were among the 100 pastors, church leaders and theological educators who met in Summative Conference working groups to reflect on how the church can better support pastors and foster vibrant congregations.

Your gifts at work

Joon Hyoung Park is a first-year student at AMBS, originally from Korea but more recently from Vancouver, B.C. With financial help from Mennonite Church Canada, AMBS and other sources, he and his family moved to campus last fall, and both Joon and Shim Beack, his wife, are taking seminary classes, while their daughters are studying at nearby Bethany Christian High School.

Gifts from friends across the church are important to keep tuition costs low, especially for students with families, international students and students preparing for service and ministry assignments. Tuition provides 17 percent of the funds AMBS needs each year and AMBS relies on contributions for 41 percent of annual income. Thank you for your gifts which help keep study affordable. **To read Joon's story and the stories of other students at AMBS, please see www.ambs.edu/admissions/why-choose-ambs/student-stories** ●

AMBS alumni news

Ordinations: Rachel Siemens (Master of Divinity 2007) First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio; **Ruth R. Harder** (Master of Divinity 2007) Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.; **Juanita Laverty** (Master of Divinity 2007) Hanover Mennonite Church, Hanover, Ont.; **Char Harris Allen** (Master of Divinity 2005) Elder in the United Methodist Church.

Jean Kilheffer Hess (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 2004) recently launched StoryShare, a business providing oral history interview services for individuals, businesses and institutions.

David Voth (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 1980) authored the book *Quality Victim Advocacy: A Field Guide*, published by Workplay Publishing. He has been director of Crime Victim Services, Ohio, since 1985. The book is a guide for measuring and improving quality and outcomes in crime victim service programs.

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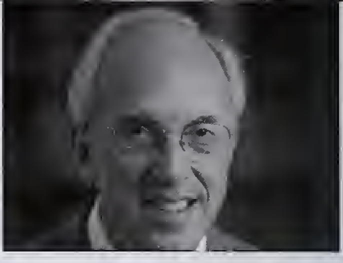
President's Window

George R. Brunk, III, Interim President



During a small group discussion that was part of the Engaging Pastors Summative Conference, a seasoned leader of a major Mennonite Church USA area conference observed that this was the first time he had engaged in sustained interaction with seminary personnel around key issues of church life. I know for a fact that he had been in settings where organizational questions of pastoral training were discussed, but, true, there was no time given for substantive sharing about the deeper questions of the church's health, including the role of church leadership in those matters.

This situation is the reason why this novel language of the "ecology of ministry" (see the articles in this issue) is important. Ministry is part of a complex system of structures, relationships and policies that define how we do church. Ministry cannot be considered in isolation from the network of interactions with other parts of church life.

Because the seminary's mission is focused on ministry preparation, the seminary is part of that larger system. In some ways this is all obvious enough. What is significant here is not just the recognition of this ministry-in-a-web reality but the question of how to work the connections in more fruitful ways.

The call for strengthening the ecology of ministry, as reflected in the discussions of the Summative Conference, comes at the time that our denomination is reviewing its organizational patterns. This creates an ideal time for a serious look at how we improve the structures of communication that link leaders at the denominational and area conference/area church levels, local pastors in the congregation, and the pastoral and theological training programs.

The Engaging Pastors program at AMBS has demonstrated how fruitful this engagement can be between pastors and seminary. It points to what could happen at the other levels of the system. The better flow of interaction would first of all build strong trust. In that context, but only then, can we do effective problem solving. Our denomination has leadership development as one of its priorities. All the more reason then to tend the network that is the "ecology of ministry." ●

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The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

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A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

panorama

Several sessional faculty members are teaching at AMBS during spring semester, augmenting the regular AMBS teaching faculty.

James R. Krabill teaches The Spirit World and the Global Church. He holds a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from AMBS and a Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham in England.

Paul Keim teaches Beginning Hebrew. He is on the faculty of Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., and holds an M.Div. from AMBS and a Ph.D. from Harvard.

Joe Kotva teaches Thinking Ethically. Joe has an M.Div. from AMBS and a Ph.D. from Fordham University. In his recent work he has focused on medical ethics and health care access.

Joni Sancken is co-teaching Foundations of Worship and Preaching with Rebecca Slough, AMBS academic dean. Joni studied at AMBS and received her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and her Ph.D. in homiletics from the University of Toronto in 2009.

Perry Yoder, AMBS professor emeritus of Old Testament, co-teaches Biblical Foundations for Peace and Justice with Mary Schertz, professor of New Testament, in four weekend sessions during the semester. ●

Fishy tale

Updating an overused slogan

It's a handy slogan, and ever since Chinese philosopher K'uan-Tzu came up with it 2,500 years ago, it has neatly expressed a core truth about giving help that lasts. He understood how short-term handouts relate to long-term impact.

Christians can relate to the image. The disciples caught fish; Jesus employed fish in powerful metaphors that endure.

Like any good phrase, however, it has been overused. It also glosses over the complexity of today's poverty.

Maybe it's time for an update.

Are fishing lessons what the poor need most? Chances are, they already know how to fish, maybe better than we do, but they lack other necessities to make it happen. Besides, not everyone fishes the way we do. Using bamboo baskets to catch red snapper off the coast of Haiti is different from angling for trout in Manitoba. Before we head out to teach, we have to be sure we actually possess the skill they need.

Maybe what they really need is better equipment. But how to get it? The banks probably won't lend them money to buy it because the poor may not have collateral or credit history. There's always the local loan shark, but who wants to pay 250 percent interest? Perhaps what they need is affordable credit so they can purchase the items on their own.

So now they have the right fishing tackle. Can they gather by the river? "Whoever owns the pond decides who gets the fish," says African-American minister John Perkins. No matter how well they can fish, they'll stay poor if they can't get access to the water. In order to feed themselves for life, they may need help getting fishing rights. That complicates things. Maybe the help they need has less to do with imparting a skill than pressing for larger issues of justice.

Let's say the poor have managed to arrange a spot on the river but a factory upstream (perhaps owned by corporations in which our pensions are invested) is dumping effluent that contaminates the river. Poisoned fish can't be sold or fed to the family. To really help the poor we may have to help them achieve better environmental standards. Or at the very least urge corporations who do business there to behave themselves and not make messes that keep people poor.

OK, let's assume our fisherfolk have overcome all these obstacles. They know how to fish. They've obtained credit at a decent price to buy fishing equipment. They've gained access to the river. The water is clean and the fish are edible.

But when they bring in the fish they discover they can't sell their catch. Why? The export market has collapsed because rich countries have imposed duties on imported fish or have subsidized their own producers so heavily that they can dump their product on the rest of the world. Maybe the best way to help is to improve trade laws to give poor countries an equal footing.

Maybe the help they need has less to do with imparting a skill than pressing for larger issues of justice.

Meanwhile, well-meaning North Americans have sent a shipload of second-grade canned fish which relief agencies are giving away on street corners. Now even the local people won't buy their product. Why pay for something that others are handing out for nothing?

K'uan-Tzu had it right—in his day. But today's poverty is far more complex.

So are the solutions.

Which means we have to get beyond glib slogans, heartfelt as they may be, if we want to make a difference.

Wally Kroeker, Winnipeg, is director of publications for Mennonite Economic Development Associates that works in 40-plus countries to provide business solutions to poverty.

A word from Mennonite Church USA leaders

Historical dimensions of the missional church

Rich Preheim is director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

Last month's Winter Olympics were unquestionably a fantastic display of athleticism and dedication. We got to see elegant ice skating, stomach-churning luge, cerebral curling and more—all with ample human drama of perseverance and sacrifice.

But the games were more than that. They were also a great history lesson, as it was impossible to watch these competitions without being made aware of past successes and failures. The U.S. men's hockey team's surprising success invoked memories of the championship squads of 1960 and 1980. Canada, motivated by its record of Olympic futility, won the most gold medals of any nation at Vancouver. Perhaps the most overlooked landmark was the presence of the first-ever winter olympians from seven countries, including warm-weather Colombia and Ghana.

Such a litany of accomplishments underscores a lesson taught by one of my undergraduate professors: history is everything. There is no aspect of life that can be divorced from historical understandings. Want more proof? Scientists' claims of global warming are based, at least in part, on examination of climate conditions over many years. How a physician treats an injury or illness is influenced by the patient's health history. Current U.S. tensions with Iran must be viewed in the context of U.S. involvement in the region through the years.

There is no aspect of life that can be divorced from historical understandings.

Likewise, history needs to be a requisite element in Mennonite Church USA's pursuit of faithfulness. In fact, the call to be missional, which has been placed at the heart of our young denomination, is actually an emphasis of the principles that fueled the formation of Anabaptism in the 16th century. The movement sought to embody Christ's example of love and peace in every facet of life. Becoming a Christian wasn't just a matter of professional or social expediency; it was to be a total reorientation of perspective and values.

Nowhere is that more evident than in Menno Simons, our church's namesake. A Catholic priest, he confessed to leading an unpriestly life, "playing cards, drinking and in diversions as, alas, is the fashion and usage of such useless people." He even admitted to not reading the Bible. But when Menno converted to Anabaptism, he became a leading advocate for a comprehensive faith encompassing more than Sunday morning.

Devotion to faithful living every day and in every facet of life became a defining characteristic of the Anabaptist movement. By the 20th century, the development of the missional North American Mennonite church was fostered by a wide range of new institutions. These were not just for ministers or missionaries. Businessmen organized Mennonite Economic Development Associates to use their expertise for God and God's people. Church members in health-care professions formed organizations such as Mennonite Medical Association, Mennonite Nurses Association and Mennonite Health Association. The various Mennonite voluntary service programs allowed people to use any number of skills and interests for the sake of the kingdom.

Just as it did nearly 500 years ago in the era of Menno Simons, that missional focus continues to generate interest and draw converts. The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee is charged with preserving and proclaiming the stories of that heritage. Carrying out those responsibilities makes the organization distinctly, even uniquely, missional.

An important reason is that it can witness to those who may not otherwise be exposed to the message of faith. The Historical Committee's archives in Goshen, Ind., and North Newton, Kan., serve hundreds of researchers a year. They include people who are not Mennonite and may not even be familiar with Mennonites. They may not even be Christian. But they come to better understand subjects that intersect with Mennonite life and thought. It might be mental health care, migration patterns, hymnody or quilting. Regardless, the very act of inquiry introduces researchers to the faith that helped shape whatever topic they are studying.

Apart from the academic process, it is probably impossible to assess the Historical Committee's effects on non-Mennonite researchers. But it's also often difficult to know the impact of a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker in an urban unit or a Mennonite Mission Network worker overseas or the countless acts that church members do everyday.

But then quantifying effectiveness is not the point of being missional. TM

Our marvelous bodies

It was a long-ago summer day, a day made for going without shoes. I was barefoot in the back yard with a bunch of friends, playing Freeze Tag—if you are tagged, you are frozen in position until someone comes along and tags you free. As this game required no particular skill in hitting or catching balls and did not require being the fastest or the strongest, I actually enjoyed playing it. That is, until the bee. A barefoot game of Freeze Tag in a backyard full of clover led to my foot landing on an unsuspecting bee, which immediately protested, stinging me and ending my afternoon fun.

The bee was doing what bees do and responding as bees respond upon the interruption. The actual sting was not so bad, but my body's reaction was severe, and I learned that I should avoid bee stings.

Human bodies are marvelous; they are at once capable in astonishing ways of carrying on any number of unseen, necessary functions for life. They can be strong and powerful, yet they are fragile. Bodies move and breathe and bend and do. Bodies tire and weaken and sicken and die. There is no guarantee about what the package one is given will be able to do. We have a modicum of control but not complete control. Somewhere in the space between, we do the best we can.

The life of Jesus tells us that our flesh, vulnerable as it may be, is worth tending to. Our bodies, though they may confuse and dismay us at times, are valuable and honorable.

At either end of the life's spectrum—tiny, newborn flesh or older, brittle bones covered with papery skin—and at all the points in between we humans and other animals contain the possibility of weakness and the eventuality of death. I remember holding each of my babies for the first time and feeling so adequate about the notion of my responsibility to care and protect these tiny beings.

Even with growing experience and confidence, that sense of awe, in the complete sense of the word, remained. We are encased in fragile flesh—flesh that is vulnerable to bees and more. This is life—we are born, and we will surely die.

God walks that path with us. The mystery and splendor of the incarnation is wrapped up in this reality. The Word became flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among humanity—humanity that sweats, weeps and bleeds.

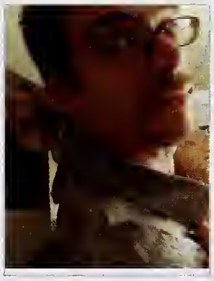
Jesus took on the fragility and vulnerability of a human body. That seems to me to be as important as remembering Jesus as wise, compassionate and bearing a certain power and strength. Perhaps it is irreverent, but I think it worth pondering that Jesus took on the very inconvenience of humanity. How much more efficient might ministry be if one did not have to eat and sleep and take care of bug bites and bee stings?

Recently in Bible class, my students and I watched a movie that depicted the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. Part of our purpose was to identify and compare narrative lenses—what episodes are emphasized and how they compare with the emphases of the Gospel writers. I was captivated by a scene during the last few minutes of the movie as Jesus—resurrected, the stone rolled away, holes in his wrists and feet, invites a grieving, disbelieving Thomas to touch the wounded flesh, acknowledge the scars and believe. The incarnation itself presents a lens through which we come to know and understand and believe.

The life of Jesus tells us that our flesh, vulnerable as it may be, is worth tending to. Our bodies, though they may confuse and dismay us at times, are valuable and honorable. All bodies, contrary to some conventional wisdoms, no matter their size, shape, color, gender, ability (and so on and so on) are gifts of and gifted by the Creator. And the Creator knows intimately the strengths and vulnerabilities of these bodies, because Jesus has worn our flesh.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Mennonites and the arts



Lowell Brown is a writer and photographer in Lancaster, Pa.

Mennonites desperately need to rethink how we view the arts. For most of us, "art" sounds frivolous—an elitist distraction—or dangerous: sensual depravity bent on destroying faith. But whether we like it or not (and whether we are aware of it or not), faith speaks in the language of the arts. To a great extent, our understanding of God is shaped by the poetry of the Gospels, the inflection of a sermon, the rhythm of hymns, the performance of Communion, an image in a children's book, the arrangement of the places we worship.

The typical Mennonite view of the arts is both too narrow and too wide. On the narrow end, we fail to recognize that, beginning with Creation itself, creative expression brings richness to every facet of our otherwise monochrome lives.

This is true even for a tradition that values simplicity and practicality. Writing (including Scripture and sermons) and music are two artistic languages that all Mennonites agree are important and many employ fluently. Quilting, woodworking and fraktur (ornamental lettering) are Mennonite arts with long histories. Conservative Mennonite communities are attentive to clothing design.

When actress Kim Stauffer began working on an Anabaptist arts network in 2007, she didn't know who would be interested. But within months of launching the Mennonite Artist Project last year, the Web site was filled with hundreds of Mennonite-related actors, designers, musicians, writers and visual artists in every age group, from all corners of the United States and Canada.

In another respect, however, the typical Mennonite view of the arts is too wide. When we do see creativity around us, we don't discriminate between juvenile and masterful skills, between a dynamic and a dull product, between good expression and agreeable content.

Last fall, I participated in a Mennonite benefit auction. The first items to sell were apple pies, the winners of a student baking contest. Each was made by a young chef who had never baked a pie before, and each raised more than $1,200. A few minutes later, another food item was up for sale: a multicourse Korean dinner for 24 guests, with a company of trained performers providing live Korean music and dance as after-dinner entertainment. But it, too, sold for about $1,200. Despite a demonstration from the performers, the lavish Korean evening didn't impress this Mennonite audience—they liked their apple pie.

Of course, the church is not a benefit auction. One could argue that in God's eyes, each person's heartfelt offering is equally valuable. I believe that's true. Still, as the Apostle Paul suggests, even in the church not all gifts are valuable for all purposes.

We seem to have no expectation that God's Living Word could leap from the page and speak to us in a new way.

Few churches would tolerate a treasurer who was a little fuzzy on math or a fellowship meal committee that resorted to cold cereal and toast. Yet on many Sundays, we sit through Scripture readings that sound like a math quiz or something on the back of a cereal box: prophecy with no conviction, history with no smile of recognition, teaching with no hint of surprise. We seem to have no expectation that God's Living Word could leap from the page and speak to us in a new way.

We call ourselves people of the Word, but often we don't care enough about words to learn how they are pronounced or to glance at them before we read them out loud in church.

Here is one place where Mennonites need this broader and narrower view of art: an expanded appreciation for the literature of the Bible and the performance of Scripture; a refined expectation that Scripture will be compelling (not merely familiar) and that the people entrusted to read it will prepare rigorously.

The arts are not evil or disposable; they are gifts of God. Whether traditional crafts such as quilting, practical skills such as architecture or seemingly foreign expressions such as dance, they are languages that can reveal new richness in God's grace.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MC USA receives $3 million surprise

180 former General Conference pastors will receive funds.

Mennonite Church USA, successor to the General Conference Mennonite Church, will receive some unexpected funds because a mutual insurance company, related to a 403(b) retirement plan it sponsored, "demutualized." More than $3 million will be distributed to approximately 180 qualifying participants over the next several months.

The money received will be distributed to those participants with an active GCMC 403(b) account or who were an annuitant receiving payments as of Oct. 1, 2002. This date was the effective date of the demutualization.

Marty Lehman, Mennonite Church USA's director of operations, sent all qualifying recipients a letter on March 22 alerting them to the distribution coming their way.

GCMC used to sponsor a retirement plan with the participants' accounts invested through a contract with an insurance company.

The most recent insurance company was Provident Mutual Insurance Company. In 1996, GCMC changed its plan to one operated by Mennonite Retirement Trust. Some GCMC ministers elected to leave their funds with Provident. Following this change, GCMC had little interaction with Provident. In 2001-2002, Provident went through a "demutualization process" and became part of Nationwide Financial. GCMC was notified in October 2002 that as part of the demutualization process GCMC had been awarded "policy credits."

The value of the policy credits was subsequently reflected in a flexible premium annuity contract issued by Nationwide to GCMC. Staff members for Mennonite Church USA have been discerning how best to distribute the funds. They solicited the advice of a number of people, including several 403(b) experts and three attorneys.

Dave Weaver, Mennonite Mission Network's senior executive for finance, also assisted in the process.

"There haven't been a lot of demutualizations," Weaver said on March 1, "so there are not many clear rules on how distributions from a demutualization should be handled. Because the plan was a 403(b) plan and a church plan, the situation was even more unique. We won't know the actual final balance of the annuity contract until Nationwide terminates the contract."

In order to ascertain how best to make the distributions, staff considered the information available from Provident, other situations in which demutualizations had occurred and recommendations from consultants.

"It took so long to resolve this," Weaver said, "because of the complexity of the situation and the lack of specific guidance available on how to handle this situation."

Staff had to work through the old plan records of participants, ascertaining exactly who would qualify as a recipient.

According to Lehman, Executive Board will retain sufficient funds to cover expenses incurred and in case other qualifying recipients are discovered. Eventually, however, all remaining funds will be distributed.—*Everett J. Thomas*

By the numbers

Demutualization funds: $3,000,000*

Effective date: Oct. 1, 2002

Qualifying participants: 170

Attorneys and consultants: at least eight

*Exact amount will not be determined until Nationwide terminates the contract.

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Stutzman installed as executive director

Augsburger, Shelly and Villegas talk about roots, branches and wings.

Everett J. Thomas

Executive Board member Terry Shue (left) leads the commissioning of Ervin Stutzman. Stutzman's wife, Bonita, is at right. At far right is Executive Board member Patty Shelly.

More than 400 people packed Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on March 7 to participate in the formal installation service for Ervin Stutzman as the new executive director for Mennonite Church USA. Stutzman began his role on Jan. 1.

Park View pastor Phil Kniss and Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) moderator Juanita Nuñez were the worship leaders for the service. Jack Suderman, general secretary for Mennonite Church Canada, brought words of affirmation.

The message was provided by three people. The first part was "roots." The second part was "branches." The third part was "fruit."

"The roots of our faith call us to faithfulness in discipleship of Christ," said Myron Augsburger of Harrisonburg, Va., "to building congregations that share the discipline of Christ, to transcend individualism and materialism by a meaningful sense of community, to hold to the priority of God's kingdom now, to be active extensions of love in an increasingly violent society and to share a witness of God's saving grace with those about us."

Patty Shelly, Executive Board member and member of the executive director search committee, spoke about branches.

"God has been faithful," Shelly said, "sustaining and empowering the branches of our church as it spreads out in witness, ministry and fruitfulness of many kinds. Abiding in the vine brings blessing. Today we celebrate that God continues to call forth leaders for the church—not only at the national level but throughout the church."

Isaac Villegas, pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Church, ended the three-person sermon by talking about fruit: "The future of any garden lies with the seeds and the soil," Villegas said. "When the fruit dies, the seeds are set free to produce new life. The secret to new life is in the compost, with the decomposing fruit, where the seeds of life abide. Compost shows us how fruit dies its way into the future. Jesus, the fruit of Mary's womb, dies his way into the future. With Christ, resurrected life is our future as well, a life that we die into."

Terry Shue, a member of the Executive Board, provided the charge to Stutzman:

Moderator: Do you believe that you are called by God and God's church to this ministry?

Ervin: I believe I am so called.

Moderator: Will you respect and be guided by the beliefs and practices of Mennonite Church USA?

Ervin: I will.

Other elements of the service included several solos by Tony Brown, Hesston (Kan.) College faculty member, and the Park View choir (see photo below), which sang "Ye Shall Have a Song." Stutzman spoke briefly, giving thanks to the many people who helped make the new assignment possible.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Park View choir members (from left): Pearl Hoover Hartman, Rachel Whitmer, Kim Troyer Schmucker

Health-care providers learn of 'Googlies'

Mennonite Health Assembly focuses on 'navigating in a sea of change.'

Many of the 235 health-care providers who gathered at the Mennonite Health Assembly in Norfolk, Va., March 4-7 take care of people who were born before 1973. But they heard that it is the people born after 1973 who will lead massive changes in our culture over the next 10-20 years.

In the opening session, Leonard Sweet, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the theological school at Drew University in Madison, N.J., said those born before 1973 are Gutenbergers—meaning our lives have been shaped by the printed word and the print version of the English Bible first introduced by Gutenberg. Those born after 1973—the year Google and cell phones were introduced—Sweet called "Googlies."

Googlies are comfortable with the new TGIF world: Twitter, Google, iPhone and Facebook, Sweet said.

"This is the culture we have," Sweet said. "God has chosen you and me to do a ministry of healing now."

The TGIF world does not communicate with words, said Sweet, but with images.

"Gutenbergers use words and points," he said. "Googlies use images and stories. Gutenbergers are immigrants in this culture; Googlies are the natives. ... We used to have kids to work the fields. Now we have kids to work the remote."

Googlies can find any information they need, said Sweet, which means there is no longer a need for someone to decide what they should learn.

"These Googlies are the first generation in history who do not need authority figures to access information," he said. "But they need authority figures to assess the information."

But this TGIF world won't last long, Sweet predicted. In 15-20 years, holograms will be so common that it won't be possible to tell if a person is real without physical contact.

"In 20 years you will be able to trust only what you touch," Sweet said, "because what you see may be a mirage, an avatar. ... The [computer] screen will disappear, and we'll move entirely into a holographic world."

National health-care reform: In a March 6 plenary session, Mennonite health-care providers got in touch with the political battles in Washington surrounding efforts to pass health-care reform.

Tammy Alexander, from Mennonite Central Committee, brought an up-to-the moment report on the efforts of President Obama to get legislation through Congress. Alexander is legislative associate for domestic affairs in MCC's Washington Office. "President Obama hopes to use the budget reconciliation process and have [health-care legislation] passed by the Easter recess," Alexander said. She also said the budget reconciliation process can only address budget implications and revenue streams in the Senate's version of the bill.

The budget reconciliation process in the House of Representatives cannot change the Senate's language on abortion, immigration or national vs. state-based exchanges, she said. The problem with using the budget reconciliation process, Alexander said, is that "it allows for an unlimited number of amendments. So the Republicans are planning to filibuster by amendments."

Blind singer/songwriter Ken Medema provided a concert on March 6 using narratives from Bible stories in his songs to illustrate the theme of the event, "Navigating in a Sea of Change."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Everett J. Thomas

Leonard Sweet was the keynote speaker at the March 4-7 Mennonite Health Assembly.

Medical humor

An easy familiarity with the human body provided some humor for health-care providers at Mennonite Health Assembly. Kenton Derstine, Harrisonburg, Va., reported that his discussion group was concerned about unprecedented ethical issues introduced by new technology.

"You might have a nurse texting a friend while caring for a patient," Derstine said. "One member of our group reported a doctor taking a personal cell phone call while doing a pelvic exam. "

Two nursing students also gave presentations. During hers, Goshen (Ind.) College senior Michelle Miller described her first clinical experience.

"I was taking care of this 88-year-old man with chronic diarrhea," she said. "The supervisor told me to give him a bath. So he sat on the toilet while I gave him a bath and changed his diaper. I had never seen a naked man before, let alone an 88-year-old man. I don't suppose there is any way to prepare for that."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Two hundred gather to 'affirm the faith'

Five pastors reinforce traditional teachings on human sexuality.

We're glad the day is finally here. More importantly, we thank God that you're here." These words from Marc Hershberger, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Lansdale, Pa., opened the one-day conference titled "Affirming the Faith: What the Mennonite Church Believes about Homosexuality" on Feb. 20. Nearly 200 people attended.

The need for the conference became apparent to both Hershberger and Lowell Delp, pastor of Line Lexington (Pa.) Mennonite Church, as "at [this] time when there are growing calls to change our denominational position about homosexuality," Hershberger said.

In response, Hershberger and Delp called together a group of pastors from Eastern District Conference and Franconia Mennonite Conference to take action.

"As this was a conference to encourage and equip members of our Mennonite community," Hershberger said, "the input was provided primarily by pastors from this community rather than outside sources. This is because we acknowledge that pastors are the denominationally ordained shepherds of our Mennonite communities."

Don Fry, pastor of New Eden Fellowship in Schwenksville, Pa., opened the first session with "And They Will Become One Flesh."

"The reality is, truth cannot exist without love," Fry said. "The reality is, love cannot exist without truth."

Fry affirmed that Scripture emulates both truth and love, which is why it has always been a core principle in the Anabaptist movement. He went on to give an overview of several important themes found in the Bible: the people of God stand out from the culture of the world and this unique identity honors God: God is the Creator of all things, including sexuality, and there is an ability to live free from the bondage of sin.

> God loves the world, and I pray the Mennonite church never forgets that. The question is, Do we love the world that much?—Lowell Delp

Drawing on Romans 1:18-32, Delp's session was titled "Therefore, God Gave Them Over."

Delp focused on three words, wrath, abandonment and grace, and asserted that God's wrath and abandonment begin when God's people turn from God. Eventually, God also turns away, leaving people to follow their own sinful desires, he said, since they practice "sexual immorality" and partake in "unnatural relationships." Once the heart and body are affected, the mind also changes, Delp said. But according to Delp, God's wrath and abandonment can be reversed.

"The Jesus I know certainly loves all people regardless of sin," Delp said. "But the Jesus I know loves people too much to let them stay there. God loves the world, and I pray the Mennonite church never forgets that. The question is, Do we love the world that much?"

Hershberger presented "Such Were Some of You," addressing three questions that Paul submitted to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 6:9-20. Through the first question, Hershberger reminded the group that everyone is in need of salvation. Through the second question, he said, "Homosexuality violates God's purpose for the body." Through the third question, he challenged the group to use the body in service to God.

Charles Ness, pastor of Perkiomenville (Pa.) Mennonite Church, shared from Matthew 19:3-6 and John 8:1-11 on "Neither Do I Condemn You; Go Now and Leave Your Life of Sin." He spoke on the purpose of marriage and the permanence of marriage and celibacy for the unmarried. Ness emphasized safe communities and reconciliation vs. condemnation and separation.

"If we are going to teach the truth of Scripture—as has been done so well today—we must come alongside with the hand of grace and mercy and a community of hope," Ness said. "If we can't do one, then we can't do the other."

Rodger Schmell, pastor of Deep Run West Mennonite Church in Perkasie, Pa., concluded the five pastoral presentations with "They Will Turn Their Ears Away From the Truth" from 2 Timothy 4:1-8. Schmell said that the Mennonite church often fails to encourage. As a result, people turn from the gospel to live the way they want to live.

The conference also included a time for personal testimony. Both Ben Cochrane, from Harvest USA, and Shawn Harrison, from Six11 Ministries, shared their individual journeys away from same-sex relationships. The church played a large role for both men along the way. The men challenged attendees to extend arms to hurting people.

Six11 Ministries grew out of Harrison's passion to reach out to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered community. The vision of Six11 is simple: share God's identity and wholeness. Harvest USA began in 1983 and is committed to equipping individuals, families and churches. Harvest USA offers individual discipleship and mentoring, support and accountability groups.—*Heidi Martin*

Audio and visual copies of the conference are available. Contact Grace Mennonite Church for information.

Mennonites address child abuse

Collaborative launches resources for Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is "Child Abuse Prevention Month," a sober reminder that while childhood is often viewed as the springtime of life—a time for exuberance, growth and joy—many children experience pain, shame and terror instead. It is especially tragic that much of this abuse is done by those who should be nurturing and protecting the child.

According to U.S. government sources, in 2007 more than 1,700 children died as a result of abuse or neglect—more than four children every day.

Over 75 percent were under 4 years of age, and in almost 70 percent of these cases, one or both parents were involved. In addition, 794,000 children were victims of maltreatment or neglect—more than 1 percent of all children in the United States. Unfortunately, many believe these figures are low due to underreporting and varying definitions of abuse.

In light of these realities, a new effort is being launched called the Dove's Nest Collaborative.

Dedicated to "empowering and equipping Mennonites to keep children safe in their homes, churches and communities," the goals are as follows:

1. Educate Mennonites about child abuse and neglect.
2. Provide Mennonite churches with resources for worship, education and outreach on how to keep children safe.
3. Empower and equip Mennonites to protect children within their own churches.
4. Empower and equip Mennonites to protect children within their communities.

A primary tool is a new Web site from Dove's Nest Collaborative at http://www.dovesnest.net/. Among other features, the site includes the following:

Sample child protection policies: These documents include a short policy by Jeanette Harder, a more thorough one prepared by Julie Prey-Harbaugh in partnership with the child protection leadership team of Franconia Mennonite Conference and one on mentoring by Marlene Bogard, minister of Christian nurture for Western District Conference.

A list of speakers and trainers: This list includes several who are certified trainers with Faith Trust Institute and Darkness to Light.

Data from the Mennonite Church USA 2006 Church Member Profile: This survey indicates that 20 percent of women in Mennonite Church USA congregations have experienced sexual abuse or violation as children or teens. For men, the incidence is 5.5 percent.

Worship resources: These resources include a bulletin insert for raising awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month and "Take Heart, Your Faith Has Made You Well," "A Service of Lament, Healing and Hope for Survivors of Abuse" and "Those Who Support Them" by Prey-Harbaugh.

A list of other resources includes: *Let the Children Come: Preparing Our Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect* by Jeanette Harder (Herald Press, forthcoming this fall) and *Making Your Sanctuary Safe: Resources for Developing Congregational Abuse Prevention Policies Packet* (Mennonite Central Committee, 2007).

In 2007, more than 1,700 children died as a result of abuse or neglect.—Linda Gehman Peachey

To learn more about this movement or join these efforts, please visit the Dove's Nest Collaborative at www.dovesnest.net or write to info@dovesnest.net. —*Linda Gehman Peachey of Mennonite Central Committee U.S.*

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Decade-long church building project comes to a close

Brooklyn church heals relationship with lender through MMA church loan

Relationships drive our lives—for good and for less than good sometimes. In 1998, United Revival Mennonite Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., had so excelled at building relationships in its economically challenged neighborhood that it had outgrown its facility, according to Moises Angustia—now an associate pastor at the church, but who then was just the pastor's son.

"When we saw that for a whole year we kept sitting people in the kitchen area for church services on folding chairs, then my father thought it would be a great idea to build a bigger building," Angustia says. They started building in 2000.

"Since then, families have continued to come, and the church has continued to grow," he said. But there is still no bigger building. "It is a long story," Angustia says. However, it's a story worth telling.

Lesson in communication: United Revival worked with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) in 1999 to secure a loan for the expansion project—and received one. In 2000, they broke ground. What followed is a lesson in how not to conduct a building program.

"To sum up," Angustia says, "there was a lot of miscommunication between the banking institution, the church, the contractors and the people running the project on the church's behalf."

Along the way a decision was made, without EMM's knowledge, to expand the scope of the project by almost 100 feet, Angustia says. Add to that some questionable behavior on the part of the contractors then involved, and what you get is a stalled church building project.

The feelings of hurt that occurred during our relationship with EMM have healed.
—Moises Angustia

"Today we understand how important it is to keep everyone together and informed," Angustia says. "But then? Then we just forged ahead, and as the work grew, we needed more money—and were denied that. We ended up stuck with a shell, the concrete foundation and the roof."

But the church kept growing in numbers, and it was having an increasing impact on its urban community, so walking away from the project was never an option.

"We had the shell—a visible project up and erected," Angustia says. "That gave the congregation hope. When the congregation had hope, that gave my father motivation."

Move forward a few years. Now a bishop in the denomination, Angustia's father, Nicholas, at the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2007 in San José, Calif., hears Mennonite Mutual Aid president Larry D. Miller talk about MMA's church loan program. The Angustias drafted a letter to MMA inquiring about a loan possibility.

J.B. Miller, MMA's vice president of investment products and overseer of the church loan program, responded to the letter—and to the congregation's need.

"After San José, it took us almost two years to get a loan in place for United Revival," Miller says. "We just kept working at it and working at it. Their giving is so good; we thought they could handle it. In August 2009 we closed the loan."

Partnership with previous lender: But it wasn't just a new loan after nine years, Miller says. It was a 50-50 partnership with United Revival's previous lender, Eastern Mennonite Missions.

"There is no question that this church is an anchor in its community," Miller says. "MMA was committed to making this happen, and I wanted to keep [EMM] involved as well, because they are a vital partner to this ministry."

MMA has been making money available for first-mortgage loans to congregations and institutions interested in building new facilities or improving existing locations since 1980. As MMA members purchase annuities to save for their retirement or other long-term goals, a portion of those deposits supports the church loan program. In turn, repayment of loans provides additional annuity opportunities for church members. It's a circle of giving, saving and lending within the church community.

But the dividends being paid back on this particular loan extend beyond the monetary, according to Angustia.

"The feelings of hurt that occurred during our relationship with EMM have healed," he says. "Because we reached out to MMA and because we were able to bring everyone to the table, we were able to agree that, no matter what happened, the church would be built."

More than just a building: United Revival began its project in 1998, and this summer the building will be occupied, Angustia says. "This church walks alongside people in their struggles, providing what we can," he says. "Our warmth and our acceptance of who people are is what is growing this church."

Miller agrees but sees something else at work, too. "This really reflects the tenacity of this congregation ... and is a statement to their connection to their community," he says.—*Tom Duckworth of Mennonite Mutual Aid*

Longtime editor looks back on rich experience

James Horsch spent over 40 years with Mennonite Publishing Network

Although his name will be listed as the editor of *Purpose* magazine until June and as editor of the *Adult Bible Study Guide* through the fall quarter, James Horsch has retired after 41 years with Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN).

Challenging, rich, full—those are the words that James E. Horsch uses to describe his career with MPN.

Although Horsch retired at the end of October 2009, his name still appears as the editor of *Adult Bible Study, Purpose* and *Mennonite Directory.*

He began his career in 1968 with what was then called Mennonite Publishing House.

Over the decades he was responsible for developing and editing curriculum for all ages, worship service bulletins, VBS materials, devotionals, elective studies and books.

"There is almost nothing for congregations that Jim didn't have a hand in over the past 41 years," says MPN executive director Ron Rempel. "Generations of children, youth and adults have grown up benefiting from the materials he helped create. He has left a lasting and valuable legacy in the church."

"It's been a great pleasure to work with James," says Eleanor Snyder, who directs Faith & Life Resources, the congregational division of MPN. "I have appreciated his careful attention to detail as well as his professional responses to readers when they shared concerns about the materials he edited. He will be missed, not only for his expertise as an editor but also for his warm, gentle, easygoing personality."

Horsch's first assignment with MPN was to revise and upgrade the *Mennonite Graded Sunday School Series.* He then went on to edit two new children's curricula—*Herald Omnibus Bible Series* and *The Foundation Series*—as well as updating the *Herald Summer Bible School Series.*

Other assignments included *Family Worship* and its successor, *Rejoice!* He also assumed full editorial responsibility for the *Mennonite Yearbook* in 1975 (now *Mennonite Directory*). He served as its managing editor from 2003-2009.

Other publications he edited include *Purpose, Adult Bible Study* and curricula such as Mennonite Central Committee's *Second Mile* series.

During his tenure, Horsch participated in several Mennonite church and ecumenical programs and events. This included serving as chair of the committee on the Uniform Series, a body that selects the biblical themes and texts for the International Sunday School Lessons used in the congregations of many communions in North America and around the world.

James Horsch

Looking back, Horsch says he enjoyed "a challenging, rich, and full life in the world of Mennonite publishing. I experienced the broad scope of the types of editorial fields offered by MPN and, in the process, gained much knowledge of the workings, life and ministries of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

"I treasure the opportunity of working with many talented colleagues, as well as with many lay and professional workers and volunteers across the church."

Horsch has been succeeded by Sharon K. Williams, who will edit *Adult Bible Study*, and Carol Duerksen, who will edit *Purpose.—Mennonite Publishing Network*

Tyler Falk, 2009 graduate
Mennonite Voluntary Service worker
Seattle, Wash.

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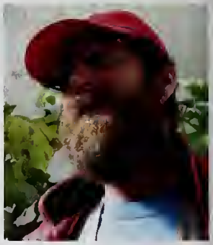
Decade to Overcome Violence continues

Rich Meyer connects Mennonite Church USA to the WCC initiative

For more than four years, Rich Meyer has been representing Mennonite Church USA on the U.S. Committee for the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). Rich, a farmer and a mechanic, travels frequently to Palestine in his work with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

In his work with the DOV—an initiative of the World Council of Churches—Meyer keeps company with other Mennonites, some of whom played a critical role in initiating the DOV. The drama unfolded at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998. Fernando Enns, a delegate from the German Mennonite churches, stood and made a proposal from the floor. Though this is not how WCC business is usually done, the delegates responded favorably, and within a year the WCC Central Committee had declared 2001-2010 the DOV.

One of DOV's goals is to "challenge the churches to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence, to relinquish any theological justification of violence and to affirm anew the spirituality of reconciliation and active nonviolence." The U.S. DOV committee meets two or three times per year and brings together representatives from primarily mainline Protestant churches and the Historic Peace Churches. During the first years, Meyer says, the agenda often seemed unclear, and he worked to figure out his particular contribution.


Rich Meyer

"Violence takes many forms, and the WCC wanted to address the problem of violence in a broad and holistic way," Meyer says. "From my perspective, what often gets lost in the shuffle is war. This is one aspect of violence where churches have not only often been silent but have blessed and supported violence and publicly honored those who participated in it. My role in this committee, in one sense, is to keep asking, And what about war?"

After several years of regular participation and building relationships, significant opportunities opened for Mennonite voices to play significant roles. In preparation for a culminating convocation in Jamaica in May 2011, an ecumenical drafting committee wrote a 23-page "Initial Statement Toward an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace." Planners anticipate that some statement like this will be adopted in Jamaica. An intense process of consultation and dialogue is envisioned to shape the final statement and build ownership. Through Meyer's involvement in the U.S. DOV Committee, Mennonite Church USA stayed informed about these developments and was encouraged to participate in this process.

Through Interchurch Relations of Executive Leadership, Mennonite Church USA recently submitted a two-page response to the "Initial Statement" that affirmed grounding the peace witness in the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus, who loved even his enemies. "Our peacemaking," the Mennonite response stated, "involves putting on the mind of Christ and being led by the Spirit." The response also encouraged churches in the "just war" tradition to make that theory "operative." Specifically, it called on churches to support selective conscientious objectors and dramatically increase programs of active nonviolence.

The two-page Mennonite Church USA response is posted at www.mennoniteusa.org/interchurch under the Peace Initiatives tab. Peter Stuckey, leader in the Colombian Mennonite church, has been appointed by the WCC to the second drafting committee that will review comments submitted. Also as part of the DOV, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is sponsoring "Peace Among the Peoples," an ecumenical peace conference July 28-31, 2010.—*André Gingerich Stoner, Interchurch Relations of Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA*

Bethel College

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The Board of Directors of Bethel College in Kansas announces the search for a new President and invites expressions of interest in this unique opportunity for leadership at the oldest Mennonite undergraduate liberal arts institution of higher education. Bethel College enrolls approximately 500 students each year in a strong liberal arts curriculum and several professional programs that prepare students for the world of work and graduate education. The institution, located in North Newton, enjoys excellent rankings in Kansas and nationally for its academic program. Founded in 1887, with an independent charter, the college has served with distinction throughout its existence.

Bethel College has a 90-acre campus with excellent facilities that provide for additional growth beyond its current enrollment. It is located 35 minutes from Wichita, the largest city in Kansas, and has easy access to highway I-135. The college operates on a budget of approximately $10m and has an endowment of $14m. The student body comprises primarily Kansas residents, and enjoys diversity in religious backgrounds, race, and international experience. Male and female enrollment is fairly balanced and a large majority of the students reside on campus. The college offers intercollegiate sports for men and women and has competitive facilities within the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference and NAIA Division II programs. The town of Newton, adjacent to North Newton, has a population of 18,000 and historically served as a railroad hub for western traffic.

The Science programs at Bethel College are recognized nationally. The college is ranked in the top 100 colleges in the country for the percentage of bachelor degree students who continue their education and earn doctorate degrees. The college has several affiliated institutions including Kauffman Museum, Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR) and Bethel College Academy of Performing Arts (BCAPA).

The Search Committee is seeking a distinguished leader who is committed to small, personalized, church-related college education offered in a caring environment. The next president should have an informed commitment to the ideals of liberal education based in the tradition of Bethel's Mennonite heritage. Collegiality and integrity in decision-making are expected at all levels of interaction with the Board, faculty, staff, students and community.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to review the Presidential Search Profile which is posted on the website of the college, www.Bethelks.edu and at www.academic-search.com.

Application instructions are provided in the Presidential Search Profile. All materials should be submitted electronically to Bethelks@academic-search.com and addressed to the Search Committee Chairman, Ray Penner Although applications will be accepted until the time that a new president is selected, candidates should plan to submit materials by April 15 for the most favorable consideration.

Dr. James A. Davis is assisting with this search. Nominations and expressions of interest will be treated in confidence and can also be directed to:

Dr. James A. Davis
jdavis@academic-search.com
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Church planting is local and organic

Mauricio Chenlo shares how denomination can support church planting efforts

Relationships trump strategy in church planting, according to Mauricio Chenlo. Today church planting happens organically and through local relationship building, he says. It is not as strategic and professional as in the past.

Chenlo works as the Mennonite Church USA denominational minister for church planting. The denominational ministry team works to bring together aspects of urban ministries, church planting, peace and justice, and intercultural relations. The team attempts to make connections between these areas, he says, and discover which principles make us more effective and faithful.

According to Chenlo, Mennonite Church USA desires to support these church-planting efforts; instead of centralizing its plans to offer more networking, communication and support for the conferences.

The first circle in church planting is the local leaders, the second is conference leaders and the third the denominational leaders and agencies.

"We don't want to interfere and tell the first circle what to do," Chenlo says. "Ownership of local must be central to how we understand church planting."

Church-planting efforts received recognition at denominational gatherings in the last year. At the Constituency Leaders Council meeting in Toano, Va., last Oct. 19-21, moderator Dick Thomas led a time for conferences to report their initiatives and mark them on a map. At the Executive Board meeting Feb. 18-20 in Hampton, Va., board members heard a report from Chenlo and offered him their support and prayers (see photo).

Through his role, Chenlo surveyed conferences about their church planting and found the following: the largest conferences carry a history of promoting the initiation of new churches; younger conferences seem to be catching up with the missional church priority; most conferences respond to local leadership starting new churches; and most conferences hold minimal guidelines and resources when it comes to church planting.

He provided the following ways that the denomination could work at providing resources for those involved with church-planting projects:

- learn about and from new immigrant churches with strong connections to their country of origin,
- offer guidelines and documents for church planting and guidelines for ordaining and licensing leaders,
- integrate underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and respect their strategies,
- develop a financial system for church-planting projects,
- work on a theological framework for church planting,
- offer more documents in Spanish,
- work with the seminaries in continuing education,
- plan an annual church-planting retreat for leaders.

See pages 46-47 for a map that locates new church plants and other initiatives across the United States as of 2009.—*Anna Groff*

Anna Groff

Members of the Mennonite Church Executive Board pray for Mauricio Chenlo's work with church planting at the Feb. 18-20 meeting in Hampton, Va.

What does a church plant need?

Community organization: Help leaders define a vision for a new community and develop the local leadership required to create a self-sustaining, thriving community.

Vision ownership: Work with emerging leaders to identify core ministry practices to become a thriving church.

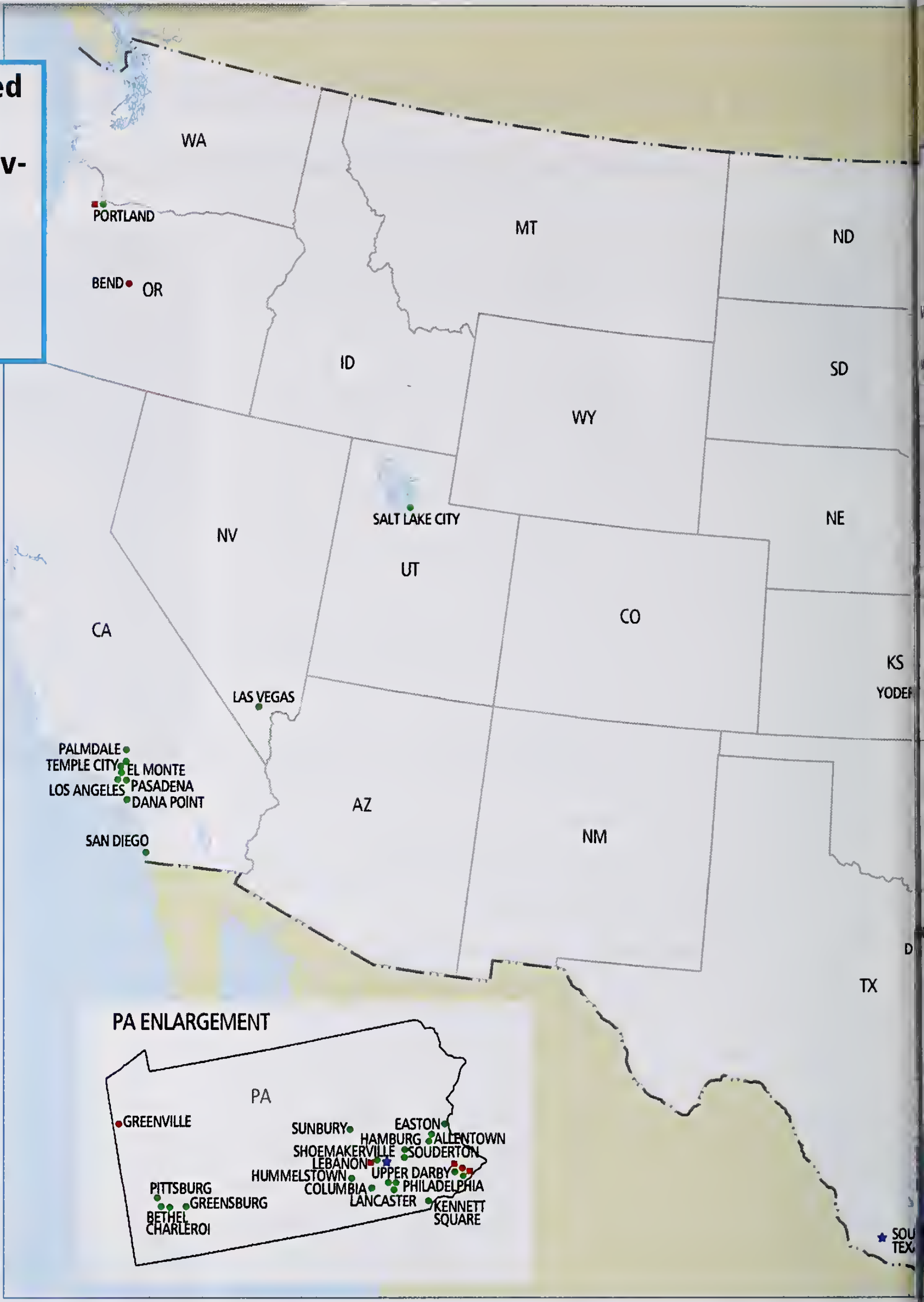
Community education & training: create opportunities for adequate leadership development skills: spiritual growth, community service, urban agenda.

Sustainable spiritual growth: Develop ministry groups that are driven by service and planting the seeds of God's kingdom.

Passing on the blessing: Help other groups plant new churches.—*Mauricio Chenlo*

Assistant editor Anna Groff surveyed area conference leaders in January, February and March to learn of activities in each category:

- 🟥 new churches (past five years)
- 🟢 church plants in various stages
- ★ locations of exploration



Allegheny: Dave Garber and Donna Mast
🟥 Grace Fellowship, Greenwood, Dela.
🟢 Asian Indian Christian Church, Pittsburgh

Atlantic Coast: Warren Tyson
🟢 African Community Church of Lancaster, Pa.
🟢 Ebenezer Evangelical Mennonite Church, Baltimore
🟢 Grace Ubuntu Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa.
🟢 Pocomoke (Md.) River Church
★ Baltimore area
★ Milford, Conn. (dual with Eastern District)
★ Portland, Maine (dual with Eastern District)
★ Springfield, Mass. (dual with Eastern District)

Central District: Lois Johns Kaufmann
🟥 Emmaus Road, Berne, Ind.
🟥 Milwaukee Mennonite
🟢 Asian Mennonite Community Church, Lombard, Ill. (dual with Illinois)
🟢 Hively Jesus Village Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Central Plains: Ed Kauffman
🟥 Mission Dei, Minneapolis
🟢 LiveIt!, Moline, Ill.
🟢 Shalom, Eau Claire, Wis.
🟢 Twin Cities, Minn.
🟢 Washington, Iowa
★ Third Way Community, St. Paul, Minn.
★ Woodland Hills, St. Paul, Minn.

Eastern District: Warren Tyson
🟢 Christ Fellowship, Allentown, Pa.
🟢 Easton, Pa.
🟢 Iglesia Menonita Ebenezer, Souderton, Pa.
🟢 United Christian Church International, Souderton, Pa.
★ Circle of Friends, Hamburg, Pa.

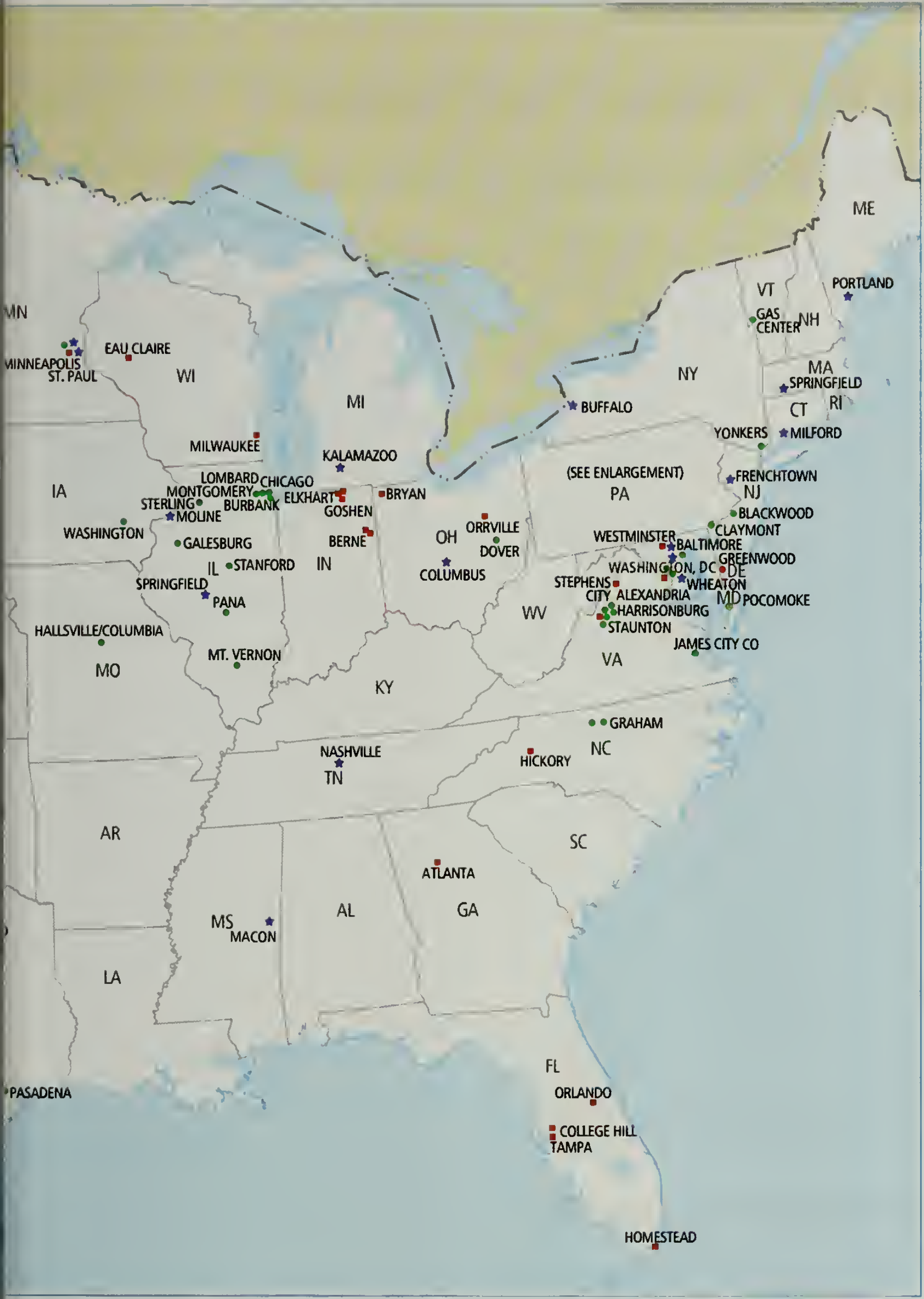
Franconia: Stephen Kriss
🟥 Atlanta Revival Center
🟥 Nations Worship Center, Philadelphia
🟥 New Hope/Nueva Esperanza Fellowship, Alexandria, Va.
🟥 Peace Fellowship Church, Washington, D.C.
🟥 Peace Mennonite Church, East Greenville, Pa.
🟥 Philadelphia Praise Center
🟢 Crossroads Community, Gas Center, Vt.
🟢 Grace Community, Charleroi, Pa.
🟢 Indonesian Community Fellowship, Greensburg, Pa.
🟢 Ripple Lehigh Valley Allentown, Pa.
★ Indonesian Fellowship, Yonkers, N.Y.
★ Nations Worship Center, D.C./Wheaton, Md.
★ Ripple Delaware Valley, Frenchtown, N.J.

Franklin: Darrell Baer
🟥 Westminster, Md.
🟢 Washington D.C.
★ Baltimore (with Atlantic Coast)

Gulf States: Nelson Roth
Not available

Illinois: Chuck Neufeld
🟢 Asian Mennonite Community Church, Montgomery, Ill.
🟢 Community Mennonite Fellowship, Sterling, Ill.
🟢 Crossroads Christian Center, Mt. Vernon, Ill.
🟢 Galesburg (Ill.) Mennonite Church
🟢 Iglesia Cristiana Roca de Esperanza, Chicag
🟢 Iglesia Evangélica Hispana, Burbank, Ill.
🟢 Pana SIMP Church Plant, Pana, Ill.
🟢 Stanford Community Church, Stanford, Ill.
★ Springfield, Ill.

Indiana-Michigan
🟥 Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship, Elkhart, I
🟥 Faith House Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.
★ Kalamazoo (Mich.) Mennonite Fellowship
★ Nashville, Tenn.



ncaster

Alleluia Worship Center, Upper Darby, Pa.

Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer, Lebanon, Pa.

Blackwood Group, Blackwood, N.J.

Columbia, Pa.

Congregación Menonita Nueva Canción, Sunbury, Pa.

CONNECT, Lancaster, Pa.

Hummelstown Group, Hummelstown, Pa.

Iglesia Cristiana El Shaddai, Shoemakerville, Pa.

Iglesia Hispana Bethel, Pa.

Iglesia Hispana Kennett Square (Pa.)

Latter Rain House of Restoration, Claymont, Dela.

North Carolina group

Philadelphia group

Upper Darby (Pa.) Mennonite Fellowship

Mountain States: Herm Weaver
Initiatives do not fit categories

New York: Gene Miller
★ Buffalo, N.Y.

North Central: Mary Ellen Kauffman
Not available

Ohio: Tom Kauffman
🟥 Chestnut Ridge, Orrville, Ohio
🟥 First Mennonite, Berne, Ind.
🟥 Grace Community, Bryan, Ohio
🟢 LifeBridge Christian Fellowship, Dover, Ohio
★ Columbus, Ohio

Pacific Northwest: Linda Dibble
🟥 International Bethel City, Portland, Ore.
🟥 The River, Bend, Ore.
🟢 Spring Water, Portland, Ore.
🟢 Peace Community Mennonite Church, Salt Lake City

Pacific Southwest: Joel Shenk
🟢 Basileia Christian Fellowship, El Monte, Calif.
🟢 Community of Faith Church, Dana Point, Calif.
🟢 Church for Others, Temple City, Calif.
🟢 Ecclesia Collective, San Diego
🟢 Emmanuel Faith Chapel, Las Vegas
🟢 La Mesa del Señor, City of Industry, Calif.
🟢 Palmdale Faith Church, Palmdale, Calif.
🟢 Rivers of Living Waters Church, Los Angeles
🟢 Wholicare Community Missionary Church, Pasadena, Calif.

South Central: Dave Gerber
🟥 Journey @ Yoder, Yoder, Kan.
★ Southern Texas
★ Macon, Miss.

Southeast: Marco Guete
🟥 Atlanta Hispanic Mennonite
🟥 College Hill (Fla.) Hispanic Mennonite Church
🟥 Hispanic Mennonite, Orlando, Fla.
🟥 North Tampa (Fla.) Christian Fellowship
🟥 United Pentecostal Church of God Mennonite, Homestead, Fla.

Virginia: Ed Bontrager
🟥 Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church, Hickory, N.C.
🟥 Manantial de Vida (Fountain of Life), Harrisonburg, Va.
🟥 The Table, Harrisonburg, Va.,
🟥 Stephens City (Va.) Korean Community Church
🟢 Anabaptist Fellowship of Charlotte, N.C.
🟢 Christian Deaf Fellowship, Staunton, Va.
🟢 Eastside Church, Harrisonburg, Va.
🟢 Early Church, Harrisonburg, Va.
🟢 Mennonite Hispanic Initiative, Harrisonburg, Va.
🟢 New Song Fellowship, Harrisonburg, Va.
🟢 New Church in James City County, Va.
🟢 Outlet 10.27, Graham, N.C.

Western District: Dorothy Nickel Friesen
🟥 House of Healing, Dallas
🟥 Iglesia Menonita Mi Redentor, Dallas
🟢 Iglesia Menonita Nueva Jerusalén, Pasadena, Texas
🟢 Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, Kan.
🟢 Iglesia Menonita Casa de Dios, Garland, Texas
🟢 Mt. Zion Mennonite Church, Hallsville/Columbia, Mo.

Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and New Ideas for Creating Congregations is available from Mennonite Publishing Network.

Spanish-speaking pastors connect with seminary

Pastors graduate from Seminario Bíblico Anabautista course in Dallas

Seminario Bíblico Anabautista, the first Spanish-language theological program offered by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., concluded with its final session in early February.

The program was established to provide ministry training to pastors of Hispanic Mennonite churches, but it achieved more than that. It also helped bridge gaps between the seminary and the Spanish-speaking pastors.

Seminario Bíblico Anabautista, which began in 2006, included graduate-level courses taught in Dallas, Texas. Over the last three years, the seminary's Engaging Pastors program sent several professors to Dallas to sit in on classes, learn to know the students and find out about the congregations in which they minister.

Then, before the end of both programs—Engaging Pastors in December 2009, and the Seminario program in February—the seminary brought the Hispanic pastors to Elkhart.

Nina Bartelt Lanctot, assistant director of Engaging Pastors, who planned the October visit, says: "The goal was mutual learning. The Seminario students could see resources here and become aware of those that could be useful to them, and the AMBS community could learn to know a slice of Mennonite Church USA that these pastors represent."

Blanca Vargas, pastor of Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida, San Antonio, Texas, says she valued "the sharing that we had with all the administrative and teaching staff and their interest in getting to know us and listen to us."

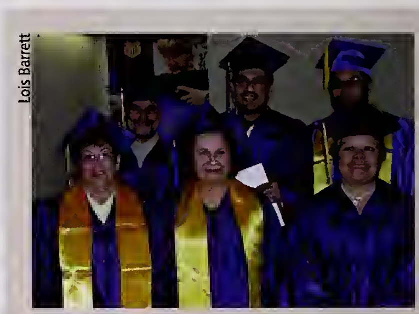
As part of their class work while they were in Indiana, students joined in a seminary chapel service and participated in the Sunday worship service at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor in Goshen, Ind. The experience also included a visit to MennoHof (the Mennonite and Amish visitors center in Shipshewana) and to the Mennonite Central Committee facilities in Goshen, where AMBS alumni Jorge Vielman and Saulo Padilla explained the work of MCC Great Lakes.

Juan Limones, pastor of Iglesia Menonita Luz del Evangelico, Dallas, said after the visit, "I became aware that the purpose of the Mennonite church is very missional and missionary and that there is also a concern for [providing] education for others. For me it was a great blessing."

Oneida Dueñas of Ferris, Texas, appreciated the warm welcome from the AMBS community. Those who planned the visit and the AMBS students "showed me that in the Body of Christ there is no distinction of race, color and culture," she says.

The final course, which concluded on Feb. 6, focused on worship and preaching with instructor José Ortiz. Seminario students who participated in this course, in addition to Vargas, Limones and Dueñas, were Alberto Parchmont and Aurora Parchmont, pastors of Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero, Pasadena, Texas; and Samuel Moran, pastor of Ministerios Restauración, Oak Grove, Ore. Several of the students who completed all the Seminario course work earned credits toward AMBS's Certificate in Theological Studies.

Seminario Bíblico Anabautista was coordinated by AMBS-Great Plains Extension and the Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. Funding for the program came from the Lilly Endowment-funded Engaging Pastors project, the Schowalter Foundation, Western District Conference and AMBS.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*


Lois Barrett

Pastors graduate from Spanish-language program

A group of pastors graduated on Feb. 20 in Dallas, Texas, from the Seminario Bíblico Anabautista, an eight-course Spanish-language program offered by the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary-Great Plains Extension with support from Western District Conference. Certificates of participation were awarded to Juan Limones, pastor of Luz del Evangelio in Dallas; Aurora Parchmont, church planter with Neuve Jerusalen, Houston; and Alberto Parchmont, pastor of Casa del Alfarero, in Houston. Certificates of completion of a Certificate of Theology were awarded to Blanca Vargas, pastor of Communidad de Vida, San Antonio; Oneida Duenas, Bible tutor, Monte Horeb, Dallas; and Samual Moran, pastor from Oak Grove, Ore. In addition there were more than 15 people who audited a course.—WDC

Photo: Front row from left: Oneida Duenas, Blanca Vargas and Aurora Parchmont. Back row, from left: Alberto Parchmont, Juan Limones and Samuel Moran.

Correction for page 48: The bottom graph in our March issue incorrectly labeled the lines. The red line represents the number of men on the Governance Council, and the blue line represents the number of women.

Executive Leadership welcomes new staff, roles

Search for director of denominational support services continues

Upon his new position as Mennonite Church USA executive director, Ervin Stutzman announced a move to a slightly different arrangement for executive staff, which will replace the associate director role with two positions: director of churchwide operations and director of denominational support services.

Stutzman appointed Marty Lehman to serve as director of churchwide operations.

Lehman's new position carries responsibility for communication, development, convention planning and church relations. She will also continue to give leadership to the Historical Committee, finance/administration and The Corinthian Plan.

In the long term, finance and administration will move to the new support services position. Lehman will continue to work from her office in Elkhart, Ind., and Kathryn Rodgers will serve as executive assistant.

On Feb. 1, Leanne Farmwald, director of marketing and communication for Mennonite Mission Network, began quarter-time with Executive Leadership as director of the Executive Leadership communication team along with her role as director of marketing and communication for Mennonite Mission Network. This is an interim arrangement and will be reviewed in the coming months.

On Feb. 22, Executive Leadership welcomed Deidre (Summerton) Bias on staff. She joins the convention planning team in the role of convention communication coordinator.

Bias will write all external print pieces related to convention promotion and marketing. She will also work with the children and junior youth gatherings and take on other logistical planning responsibilities as needed.

Bias, a Goshen and Elkhart, Ind., native and a Goshen College graduate, attends College Mennonite Church in Goshen. Most recently she worked for First Steps as the family outreach and public awareness coordinator.

Her responsibilities included promoting the statewide program, which works with children, birth to 3, who have special needs and their families. She loves to read and travel and is always in the midst of planning the next adventure for her and her family. *—Mennonite Church USA*

Marty Lehman

Leanne Farmwald

Deidre Bias

How to be a peace-oriented family

Mennonite Women Bible Study Guide by Elizabeth Soto available in May

The 2011 Mennonite Women Bible Study Guide, *Seek Peace and Pursue It: Women, Faith, and Family Care*, by Elizabeth Soto will be available in May from Mennonite Publishing Network.

The Bible Study Guide focuses on families becoming more peace oriented and less violent as indicated in Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments. Soto developed an interest in reducing family violence through her work with families suffering from violence.

"Family life is near to our hearts as women," Soto says. "We are usually mediating, negotiating, intervening, nurturing and caring for those we love within the holy space of our family. We need to find ways of more effectively promoting the value of peace within our families."

Soto was born in Puerto Rico but lived part of her childhood in Chicago. In 1984, she returned to the United States to finish her Master of Arts in Religion degree at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

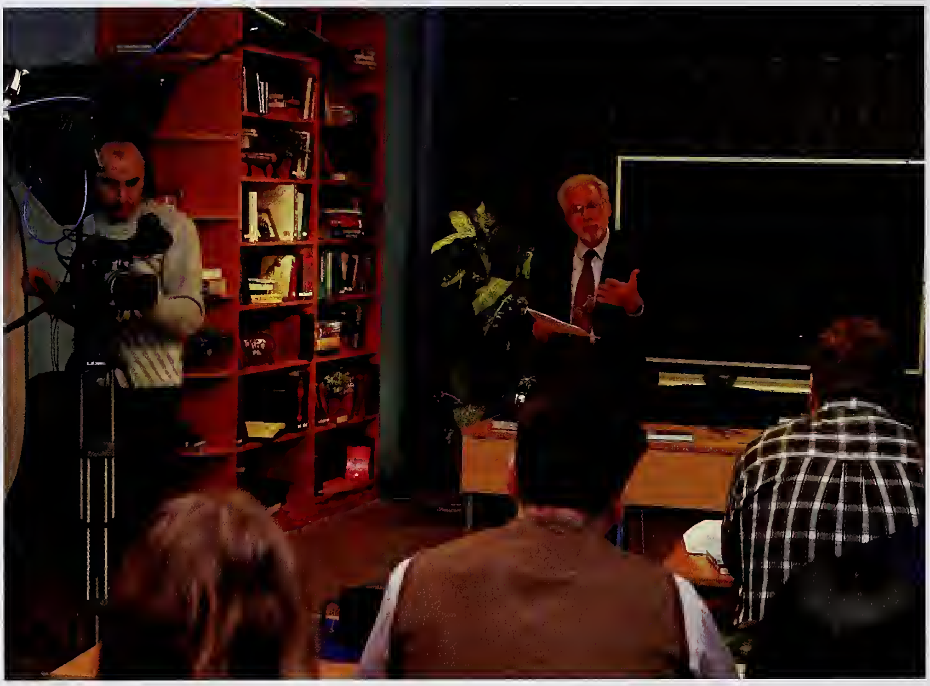
With her husband, Frank Albrecht, and two children, Soto did service work in Colombia for seven years and was ordained for ministry by the Colombian Mennonite Church. In 2005, Soto completed a doctorate in ministry with an emphasis on international feminism. Her dissertation, *Family Violence: Reclaiming a Theology of Nonviolence*, was published by Orbis Books.

Elizabeth Soto

Soto and her family attend Laurel Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. Soto is coordinator for field education at Lancaster Theological Seminary and also works as an associate chaplain at Women & Babies Hospital in Lancaster.*—Patricia Burdette for Mennonite Church USA*

EMM's David Shenk films video course

Bridge-building lectures on Islam and Christianity for Russia, Central Asia


Mikhail Sushkov

Professional videographers prepare the video course taught by David Shenk (on right). The lectures on "Theological and Practical Approaches to Islam" will be available in English and Russian on DVD and online.

Russian Baptists at the Trinity Video Seminary in Kursk, Russia, hosted David W. Shenk for 25 hours of teaching on Islam and Christianity during the month of January. Shenk serves as global consultant with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Shenk says the request for the video series grows out of increasing awareness of the presence and dynamism of Islam throughout Russia and Central Asia. Feelings of apprehension sometimes accompany that awareness, as occasional conflicts have erupted between Muslims and Christians or secularists. Conflicts can also develop between moderate Muslims and minorities that embrace militant visions of a purist Islamic political order.

Loosely affiliated with the Baptist Union but serving a broad spectrum of the evangelical churches in Russia and Central Asia, the seminary will release the lectures on DVD and on the Internet to help equip Christian leaders for peacemaking with Muslim communities.

Shenk lectured for five hours a day on the "Theological and Practical Approaches to Islam." He said he was keenly aware of the diversity in his broader audience, as the course is slated for wide dissemination throughout the region. Sponsors had invited Shenk in part because they felt it would be helpful for someone from outside the region to make these presentations.

As he lectured, Shenk also interacted with the seminary faculty who attended the sessions, contributing appropriate questions and comments as the week unfolded.

Two of Shenk's books on Islam, written with a Muslim friend Badru D. Kateregga, which have been translated into Russian, augmented the 20 lecture topics covered in the course.

"It was an excellent week with professional videographers who captured the dynamism of the experience," Shenk says. "I spoke in English without a translator, but the video will have Russian overlay for release throughout the region. The English version will also be available internationally."

Shenk says that whenever he teaches a course on Islam, he tries to imagine that his friend, Badru, is in class teaching with him. This leads him occasionally to comment, "What I am going to share, Badru would not agree with. But this is how I see it through the lens of Christian faith."

Shenk used that same format in these lectures. He says he tried to imagine an audience in which large numbers of Muslims were also listening and responding to what was said. This approach requires not only truth but kindness.

"This does not mean sugarcoating the issues," Shenk says, "but rather addressing the divergences between Islam and the gospel directly, in ways that build bridges rather than walls. I hope that Muslims who listen will respond by saying, 'Shenk has represented Islam truthfully.' "

Shenk says that as he lectured he also tried to represent the gospel as good news for everyone, including Muslims.

He says he hoped to teach in a way that any Muslim who might hear and see the teaching would respond, by saying, "Now I understand why Christians believe the gospel is good news for everyone, including us Muslims."

In addition to this new course on Islam and Christianity, Trinity Video Seminary has more than 50 courses on theology and Christian faith that are offered through DVD and the Internet.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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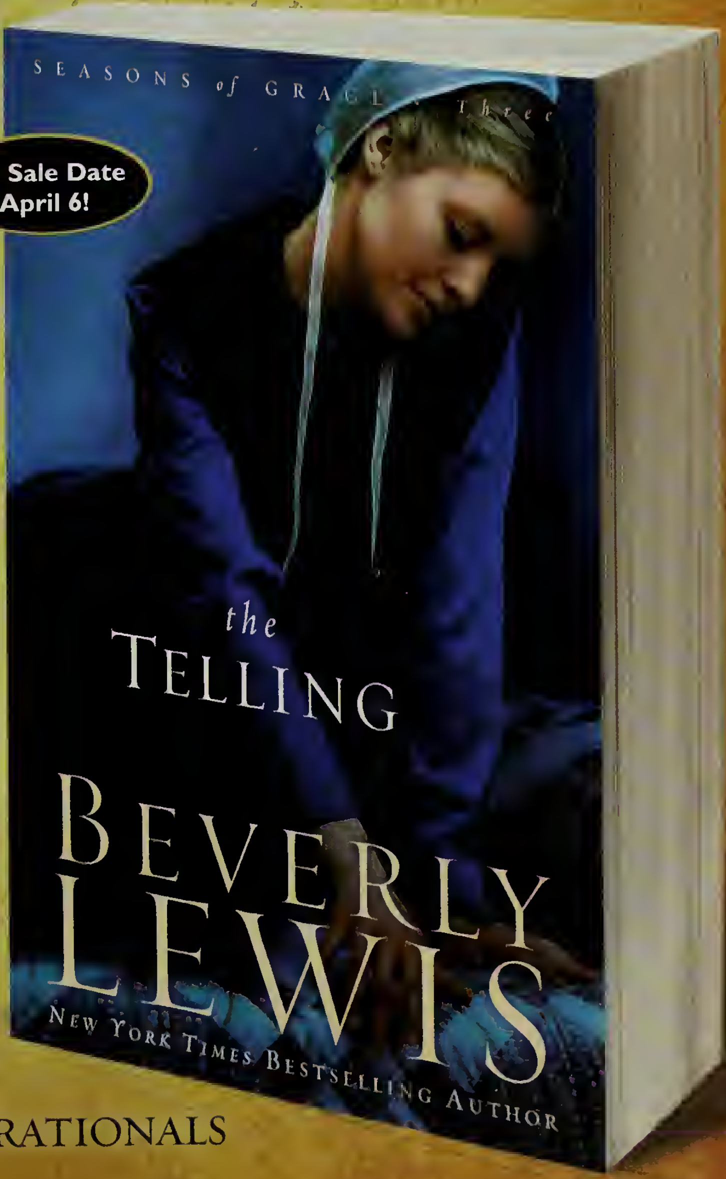

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—*Booklist*

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CALENDAR

Annual Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Banquet and Program, April 10; 6:30 p.m., at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland,.Pa. Call 717-393-9745 to register.

Many Voices Yet One Voice: Program of Music and Drama, April 25; 3 p.m. Theater of the Seventh Sister will be performing scenes from their Lancaster historical drama, "Seed of a Nation." Part of the **Lancaster Roots 300** events throughout 2010.

PULSEations: 15 years of the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience at 6:30 p.m. on April 16 at the Union Project, 801 N. Negley Ave. in Pittsburgh. Advance tickets are $10/at the door $15.

The Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster (MCCL) will perform five concerts April through June. For more information call 717-898-0398 or go to www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org.

Annual Lancaster Family History Conference, May 8; 8:30 a.m.-4:15 p.m., at Willow Valley Resort. Call 717-393-9745 to register.

WORKERS

Hadtasunsern, Chaiya, was ordained as pastor of Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church in Hickory, N.C., on Feb. 21.

Ranck, Jay L., retired from lead pastor role at Mechanic Grove Mennonite Church, Quarryville, Pa., on Feb. 1.

Rutter, Richard M., was licensed as associate pastor at Crossroads Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Jan. 17.

Sensenig, Kenneth, was licensed for MCC Leadership at Red Run Mennonite church, Denver, Pa., on Jan. 17.

OBITUARIES

Alexander, Joan, 95, Salt Lake City, Utah, died Dec. 16, 2009. Spouse: David Alexander (deceased). Funeral: Dec. 29 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Blosser, Peggy Ann Yoder, 67, Iowa City, Iowa, died Feb. 16 of a heart attack. Spouse: Harold Blosser. Parents: Clifford and Marjorie Stutzman Yoder. Child: Sonya Blosser; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Boehr, Donald, 91, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 22. Spouse: Laura Friesen Boehr. Parents: Bernhard and Sarah Mierau Boehr. Children: Stan, Vivian Pereboom, Stuart, Laura Steingard, Doris Miller, Brenda Srof; 15 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 25 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Boller, Martin Dean, 85, Kalona, Iowa, died Feb. 12. Spouse: Leona Gingerich Boller. Parents: Jason and Emma Miller Boller. Children: James, Arnold, Emma Lou Miller; 12 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Boshart, Harold Lyle, 73, Carthage, N.Y., died Feb. 27. Spouse: Constance Joslyn Boshart. Parents: Clayton and Florence Bast Boshart. Children: Daniel, Brian, Timothy, Shawn, Kevin; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 3 at First Mennonite Church, New Breman, N.Y.

Brehm, Tori, 34, Henderson, Neb., died Dec. 2, 2009. Parents: Dean and Jane Brehm. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Brown, Malinda "Linda" Rose Lingenfelder Regier, 92, Newton, Kan., died March 7. Spouse: Max Regier (deceased). Spouse: Lelus Brown (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Susanna Lingenfelder. Children: Rosalind Scudder, Max Regier, Mary Regier, Robert Regier, Melissa Ann Keenan, Mark Regier, Bill Brown, Anita Sadowsky, Martin Brown; 24 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

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The mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

Brown, Vivian Weldy, 94, Wakarusa, Ind., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Abner Brown (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Golda Wenger Weldy. Children: LeVeda Bontrager, Annabelle Nisen, Abner, Jr., Kermit, Norma; 18 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Feb. 25 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa.

Burkhardt, Doneta Hershberger, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 5. Spouse: John W. Burkhardt (deceased). Parents: Freed and Nina Horner Hershberger. Children: Ronald, Gloria Ziegler, Debra Thomas; four grandchildren; one step-grandson; one great-granddaughter; one step-great-granddaughter. Funeral: Feb. 8 at Greencroft Meeting House, Goshen.

Courtney, Mabel King, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died March 8. Spouse: Leore V. Courtney (deceased). Parents: William Henry and Carrie Anne Nofzinger King. Funeral: March 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Deckert, Ronald L., 67, Freeman, S.D., died March 9. Spouse: ElVera Hofer Deckert. Parents: Herman and Delilah Ratzlaff Deckert. Children: Melissa Deckert, Darren. Funeral: March 13 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Eash, Elon Henry, 87, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 22 of cancer. Spouse: Lorene Nofziger Eash (deceased). Parents: Ervin and Ada Aeschliman Eash. Children: William, Neal, Marybeth Watterson; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Eichorn, Virginia Rae, 87, Grantsville, Md., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Alvin B. Eichorn (deceased). Parents: Leafy Leith. Children: Dwight, Donna Winters, Janet Blocher, Arthur, Leonard, Keith, Robert; 19 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Memorial service: March 13 at Newman Funeral Home, Grantsville.

Eigsti, Agnes Weaver, 99, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Orie J. Eigsti (deceased). Parents: Joseph H. and Anna Stuzman Weaver. Children: Karl, Nicholas; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral service will be held at a later date.

Epp, Carl H., 90, Henderson, Neb., died Dec. 29, 2009. Spouse: Margaret Ruth Tieszen Epp. Parents: Heinrich and Elisabeth Richert Epp. Children: Mark, Mary Klassen, Carmen Shelly; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen, Gladys Huebert, 98, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Herman I. Friesen (deceased). Children: Janice Siebert, Marlene Ott, Joan Friesen, Lloyd; 12 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen, Olga Janzen, 92, Henderson, Neb., died Dec. 2, 2009. Spouse: Albert H. Friesen (deceased). Parents: Jacob D. and Helena Peters Janzen. Children: Roger, Russell, Rondell; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 8 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Gingerich, Rev. Andrew L., 98, Lowville, N.Y., died Feb. 21. Spouse: Esther Zimmerman Gingerich. Parents: Jacob and Lydia Lehman Gingerich. Children: Lois Bast, Willard, Hubert, David; 11 grandchildren; 18 great-granchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Croghan Mennonite Church, Croghan, N.Y.

Hamm, Donald, 85, Freeman, S.D., died March 1. Spouse: Miriam Glanzer Hamm. Parents: Henry and Anna Janzen Hamm. Children: Alan, Joseph, Joyce Palmateer, Sidney; 12 grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; one great-grandchild; six step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Herald Press

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Hamm, Willie, 85, Altona, Manitoba, died Feb. 9. Spouse: Mary Hamm. Parents: Bernard G. and Suzanna Janzen Hamm. Children: Elaine Gerbrandt, Elvira Klassen, Rob, Larry; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Harms, Leona, 105, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 19. Parents: John A. and Mary Schmidt Harms. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Hart, Amanda Irene Bryan, 95, Doylestown, Pa., died Feb. 25. Spouse: Charles K. Hart (deceased). Parents: William and Ella Trauger Bryan. Child: Walter Bryan Hart; one granddaughter; two great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter. Funeral: March 2 at Doylestown Mennonite Church.

Hostetler, Bruce David, 61, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 21 of a heart attack. Spouse: Cheryl Stutzman Hostetler. Parents: F. Dale and Vivien Schweitzer Hostetler. Children: Luke, Lezlie Patton, Cydney Eshleman; three grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Jantzi, Mabel Luella Burkholder, 91, Glendale, Ariz., died Feb. 10. Spouse: Albert Jantzi (deceased). Parents: Adam and Beulah Hooley Burkholder. Children: Judith Jantzi Weaver, Denton, Paul, Sherrill Jantzi Rudy; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Glencroft Retirement Community, Glendale.

Jenkins, Edward Atkinson, III, 84, Reedley, Calif., died Jan. 16. Children: Suya Colorado-Coldwell, David, Thomas; one grandchild. Memorial service: Feb. 20 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Klingenberg, Velma Ruth Regier, 87, Reedley, Calif., died Feb. 10. Spouse: Herman Klingenberg (deceased). Parents: Albert and Selma Penner Regier. Children: Eddie, Myrna Quinn; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Kupeerus, Sjoerd, 89, Milford, Ind., died Jan. 8. Spouse: Elizabeth C. Clemmer Kupeerus (deceased). Parents: Frank and Hebeltje Mulder Kupeerus. Child: Gerald; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Mishler Funeral Home, Milford.

Lehman, Agnes M. Hershberger, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Reuel S. Lehman. Parents: Earl and Mary Rhoads Hershberger. Children: Jeanne Rothchild, Judy VanderMaas, Bruce; four grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Goshen College.

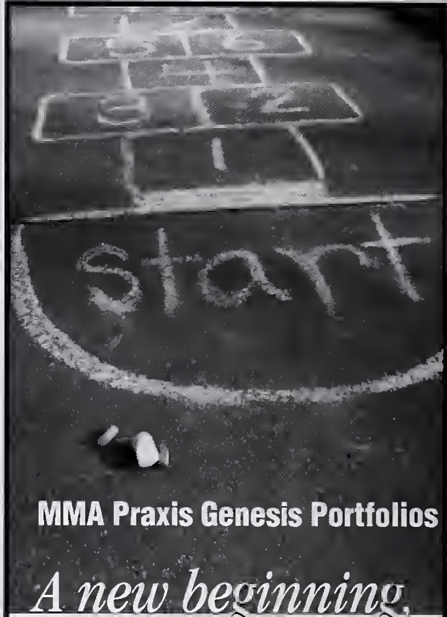
Linder, Luella, 79, Louisville, Ohio, died Feb. 18. Parents: Eli and Lizzie Schmucker Linder. Funeral: Feb. 22 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Loewen, Helen Kroeker, 93, Altona, Manitoba, died Feb. 4. Spouse: Jake L. Loewen (deceased). Parents: F. B. and Agnes Kroeker. Children: Frances Heinrichs, Grace Knelson, Lloyd, Warren, Dwight, Lin; 15 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb 7 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Martin, Beatrice Dettweiler, 79, Elmira, Ontario, died Jan. 19. Spouse: Ervin L. Martin. Parents: Norman and Lucinda Dettweiler. Children: Lois Pryse, Phyllis Martin-Neufeld, Linda Martin, Elizabeth MacPherson, Christy Hoffman; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Floradale Mennonite Church, Floradale, Ontario.

Mayer, Clayton, 89, Sarasota, Fla., died Dec. 21, 2009. Spouse: Lydia Steckley Mayer (deceased). Parents: Solomon and Lydia Mayer. Children: Cyndi Brubacher, Marilyn Beachy, C.J.; 15 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Miller, Kathryn Grace Elnora Yoder, 86, Salem, Ore., died Jan. 19. Spouse: Warren Miller. Parents: Min Edward Z. and Alice Troyer Yoder. Children: Edwin, Edward, Pamela; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 31



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Mishler, James W., 71, Shipshewana, Ind., died Feb. 5. Spouse: Darlene Helmuth Rheinheimer Mishler. Parents: Sanford and Millie Nusbaum Mishler. Children: Ami Glassburn, stepson Craig Rhienheimer, stepdaughter Gayle Roth; four grandchildren; five step-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Moon, Naomi G. Graybill, 85, Scottdale, Pa. and Guilford, N.Y., died Feb. 9. Spouse: Ivan D. Moon. Parents: Bishop J. Paul and Phebe Martin Graybill. Children: Rachel A. Kutcher, Daniel E., Lois N. Mannhardt, Elisabeth E. Crofutt; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 20 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Nunemaker, Miriam R. Harter, 89, Wakarusa, Ind., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Willis Nunemaker. Parents: Earl and Bertha Harter. Children: Paul, Sharon Brooks, Lowell, Don, Glen, Linda Nunemaker, Ron; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa.

Pankratz, Helen Mierau, 102, Henderson, Neb., died Jan. 10. Spouse: Alvin J. Pankratz (deceased). Parents: Henry and Aganatha Bruks Mierau. Children: Inez Epp, Joe; five grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; 23 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Puffinburg, Olive Kathryn Brenneman, 87, Springs, Pa., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Daniel Leroy Puffinburg. Parents: Ernest and Amelia Schrock Brenneman. Children: James, Mary Brant, Lois Ann Butler; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Siebert, Arlin, 84, Henderson, Neb., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Janice Siebert. Parents: Aaron and Margaret Friesen Siebert. Children: Myron, Janelle Goding, Brenda Friesen, Larry; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Slabach, Monroe C., 80, Orrville, Ohio, died Feb. 26 of a stroke. Spouse: Beatrice Joan Hilty Slabach. Parents: Crist N. and Mary Miller Slabach. Children: Mark, David, Ruth Emswiler, Regina Brubaker, John, Rhoda BanBenschoten, Tim, Miriam Warnock; 29 grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 1 at Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Steier, Evelyn Rose Hunnell Bergen, 84, Henderson, Neb., died Jan. 4. Spouse: Elvin Steier. Spouse: Harley Bergen (deceased). Parents: Henry and Matilda Ochsner Hunnell. Children: Terry Bergen, Tim Bergen; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 9 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Tessman, Olene Kliewer, 63, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 8. Spouse: John Doug Tessman. Parents: Albert and Mary Mierau Kliewer. Children: Jason, Corbin, Chad; six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Thieszen, Abraham P., 99, Henderson, Neb., died Jan. 20. Spouse: Margaret Buller Thieszen (deceased). Parents: Abraham A. and Aganetha Peters Thieszen. Children: Darrel, Walter, Laverna Morgan, Evelyn Batson; seven grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Tyson, Millard, 89, Silverdale, Pa., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Jeanette Moyer Tyson. Parents: Raymond and Martha Tyson. Children: Donna Greene, Mary Lou Davenport, Cynthia Hause; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Anders-Detweiler Funeral Home, Souderton, Pa.

Unger, George Stoesz, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 29. Spouse: Dorothy J. Keller Unger. Parents: Peter N. and Helena Stoesz Unger. Child: Ben. Funeral: Feb. 3 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Weirich, Harvey H., 86, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Martha Slabach Weirich. Parents: Levi and Elizabeth Zehr Weirich. Children: Tony, Cheryl Burton, Brenda Szirovecz; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 20 at Miller-Stewart Funeral Home, Middlebury, Ind.

Yoder, Esther Peachey, 76, Belleville, Pa., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Warren Yoder. Parents: Joe L. and Minerva Glick Peachey. Children: Brenda Coggin, Cheryl Burns, Cedric, Rodney; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa.

Yoder, Harold, 94, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 30. Spouse: Mildred Kinsinger Yoder (deceased). Parents: Christian and Mary Miller Yoder. Children: H. Marcus, Rachel Schwarzendruber, Della Gascho, John; 11 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at West Union Mennonite Church, rural Parnell, Iowa.

Zimmerman, Erma Ruth Zook, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 7. Spouse: Lester Jay Zimmerman (deceased). Parents: Edward K. and Nancy Edith Hershberger Zimmerman. Children: Judy Herr, Mary Jane Zimmerman, John L., Ronald J.; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite,* call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email advertising@themennonite.org.

Church planting coordinators (two positions): **Lancaster Mennonite Conference** and **Atlantic Coast Conference** are seeking self-motivated, missionally minded person(s) for separate .25 FTE positions with the two conferences. The preferred candidate(s) will have ability to recruit, coach, resource and network with church planters as well as walk alongside established congregations who are seeking to follow their missional calling. The preferred candidate(s) should have the ability to work with a team and collaborate with other Mennonite Church USA area conferences. Salary and expenses compatible with MC USA salary guidelines, immediate opening. Send resumé to or contact Joanne H. Dietzel, 2160 Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, PA 17602; jdietzel@lancasterconference.org; 717-293-5246 ext. 102; or Warren L. Tyson, 2257 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602; 717-394-8107; warrent@atlanticcoastconference.net.

Goshen College seeks ***full-time, tenure-track music faculty*** starting fall 2010 to teach music education courses and supervise student teachers, conduct the orchestra and develop professional relationships with area schoolteachers. Doctorate in music education or conducting (or ABD) preferred; experience teaching music at the elementary and/or secondary levels required. For more details and to apply, see the position announcement at: www.goshen.edu/employment. With a commitment to building a diverse faculty and staff, minority people are encouraged to apply.

Souderton Mennonite Church, Pa., seeks a ***part-time director of music and worship*** to plan and lead worship for both traditional and contemporary worship settings. The candidate should be a gifted worship leader and musician who will be able to lead, train and equip other people and teams to lead worship as well. This person should be a gifted musician, eager to lead people into the presence of God in worship with a faith rooted in the Anabaptist understanding of knowing and following Jesus. Interested applicants should forward questions and resumés to: Gerry Clemmer, Senior Pastor, c/o Souderton Mennonite Church, 105 W. Chestnut St., Souderton, PA 18964; 215-723-3088 ext. 18; gclemmer@soudertonmennonite.org.

Join **Frazer Mennonite Church** in its ***centennial celebration on Oct. 15-17***. A summer Bible school reunion is planned for June 12 and a special service on May 9. See www.frazermennonite.org for details or contact Harry King at info@frazermennonite.org or 610-644-3397.

Central Plains Mennonite Conference (CPMC) is seeking a gifted leader for the position of ***executive conference minister***. This is a full-time position for an individual who will be able to give overall leadership to the conference through tending and articulating the vision of CPMC. It also involves leading and working with a ministry team that has two members in place. A complete job description is available on the CPMC Web site. We invite interested individuals to send a letter of application to the search committee chairperson and to direct the denominational office to forward their Ministerial Leadership Information form to the chairperson. The target start date for this position is Aug. 1, 2010. The letter of application can be sent to: moderator@centralplainsmc.org or CPMC Search Committee, c/o Diane Zaerr Brenneman, 3243 Johnson Iowa Rd., Wellman, IA 52356.

Goshen College seeks ***full-time professor of Informatics*** beginning fall 2010 to develop and teach courses in Informatics, advise student capstone projects, work with other departments to develop cognates and promote the new program. Ph.D. preferred, master's degree required, in a computing field. Prior experience in establishing an Informatics program or prior teaching experience in Informatics preferred. For further details and to apply, see the position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment. With a commitment to building a diverse faculty and staff, minority people are encouraged to apply.

God's kingdom needs workers! If you're a young adult (or if you know a young adult) who'd like to gain experience and serve God at the same time, check out ***Radical Journey and Service Adventure***. Live, work and worship in community—and have fun, too. Service.MennoniteMission.net

Goshen College seeks applicants for a ***full-time nursing faculty member*** to teach psychiatric/mental health nursing courses in the classroom and clinical setting. The ideal candidate will bring significant experience in nursing practice and nursing education. Doctorate in nursing or doctoral candidate preferred, master's degree in nursing required. For further details and to apply, see the position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is a liberal arts institution affiliated with Mennonite Church USA.

Pastor for family ministries: A diverse Southern Alberta Mennonite fellowship of 300 is looking to add to our leadership team. The prospective candidate will be asked to demonstrate expertise in leading worship, mentoring young adults, directing family-based outreach programs and walking with fellow church members in their daily lives. The candidate will be expected to contribute to existing church programs and help develop strategies for local ministries. Please reply to Peter Janzen at **Coaldale Mennonite Church**; email cmchurch@telusplanet.net; fax 403-345-5303.

Calgary First Mennonite Church, located in central Calgary, invites applications for a ***full-time lead pastor*** position. Our congregation seeks an applicant with a commitment to Mennonite theology and to the practices of the Mennonite church. We seek a spiritual leader with gifts of preaching, teaching and pastoral care. Related education and experience in pastoral leadership is a priority. Please direct resumés to our Pastor Search Committee Contact: Marguerite Jack: mjack@netkaster.ca.

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ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (July 23 - August 4)
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FAITH LUTHERAN HOLY LAND TOUR (September 5-16)
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Trinity Mennonite Church is located in the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains between Calgary and Okotoks, Alberta. We are a growing congregation with an active membership of about 100, with diverse ages, occupations and cultural backgrounds. We are actively involved with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church Alberta. We seek a ***pastor*** who will provide strong leadership and focus on the vision, mission and values defined by our congregation, working together with our members and participants to foster a faith community that is open and welcoming to new participants and is founded upon the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith. Proposed start date on or about July 1, 2010. Please apply in confidence to: Rob.Doerksen@shaw.ca or Rob Doerksen, Trinity Mennonite Church, RR 1 Site 17 Box 21, DeWinton, AB T0L 0X0, Canada.
http://trinity.mennonitechurch.ad.ca/

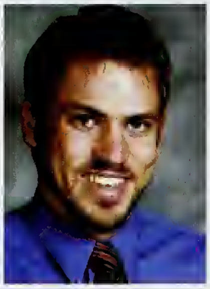
Salem Mennonite Church of Tofield, Alberta, Canada, *is celebrating 100 years as a congregation July 24-25*. We would love to have you help us celebrate this historic and joyous event. Preregistration by May 31 is imperative so we can properly plan for this time together. For further information and/or to pre-register contact; Joe and Elaine Kauffman by mail: Box 212 Tofield, Alberta, AB T0B 4J0, Canada. Phone 780-662-2344; email jolane72@gmail.com.

Mennonite Publishing Network seeks a full-time ***managing curriculum editor***. Primary responsibilities include developing, managing and editing curriculum and other publications with the Faith & Life Resources imprint. Must have training and/or experience in education, theology and editing. Preferred location in Elkhart, Ind., or Goshen, Ind. Other locations will be considered. Mid-July start date. Contact Ron Rempel for more information, rrempel@mpn.net or 800-631-6535.

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, Colo., is seeking applicants for the new position of full-time ***program director***. Responsibilities include assisting the executive director in facilitating camp programs and marketing in addition to helping serve campers, guests and volunteers with food service, housekeeping and office needs. Cover letters and resumés accepted through May 15 with a fall start date. Contact Corbin Graber, executive director, with interest: 719-687-9506 or corbin@rmmc.org.

Waynesboro Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., is seeking a one-half time ***youth minister***. We are a vibrant, mission-minded congregation committed to discipleship with youth, both within and outside of WMC. A wonderful opportunity for an EMS seminarian. Contact: Howard Miller at millerh@ntelos.net or 540-471-9526.

The prodigal son—with a twist



Peter Epp lives in Portland, Ore., and is a member of Portland Mennonite Church and a member of Young Adult Fellowship.

I don't know about your generation, but mine grew up hearing all about the parable of the prodigal son. It must've made an impression, because we seem to have ended up living it—with a twist. Consider this:

Generations of Mennonite parents have been passing on a priceless inheritance: commitment to faith-centered Anabaptist community (or "church," if you like it short and sweet). The youngest sons and daughters of these faithful parents (my generation) have welcomed their inheritance. We love the vigor of Mennonite colleges, the relevance of Mennonite Central Committee, the beauty of Mennonite camps, and—most of all—the full benefits of Mennonite community.

Masses of post-college Mennonite young adults are flocking to vibrant cities such as Denver, Portland and Pittsburgh to enjoy that social richness. It's easy for us; generations of diligent ancestors set the foundation for it.

But we forget (or choose not) to nurture our inheritance. Thanks to the social connections we've inherited, we can now throw great parties or field fun-loving softball teams. But how much are we doing to build up our local Mennonite congregations? It's as if we enjoy our Mennonite identity so much on Saturday night that we don't have any energy left to bring it to church on Sunday morning.

If the trend continues, it's hard to believe that we'll maintain the only thing that could pass this inheritance on to our kids: the church. You won't find the Mennonite generations-to-come rallying around their grandparents supper club, or that great election party they threw in 2008. Our social connections can be great, even spiritually fulfilling, but I can no longer deny a hard truth: When it comes to the future of Mennonite identity, we're withdrawing, not investing.

While we do our part as the free-spending prodigal son, there are those who must feel like the prodigal son's brother. They've committed to their home churches while the rest of us have gallivanted around the world. There must be times when they resent those of us who drop by church because we want a place to make a name for ourselves, get married or bring our visiting parents. It must be even harder because the congregation rushes to accommodate us; they want to win us back.

The connections to the parable are almost tailor-made.

There's a new twist, though. A third sibling has quietly joined us in the meantime. She (or he) often has a background that we don't consider traditionally Mennonite. She may be from a growing church plant for non-English-speaking Mennonites. Or she may be one of the many spiritual seekers who are finding that Anabaptism weathers postmodernism surprisingly well.

Still, we overlook her contributions. We feel an almost familial connection to the Mennonite friends we've known longer, even those not at church.

As a result, we spend more time on our old friends and less of it welcoming people who choose to be there. I do this every time I welcome a new person after worship but cut the interaction short to talk with my "traditionally Mennonite" friends.

We could invite the new person into the conversation, but she'd probably feel awkward—especially since so much of our "Mennonite" conversation is about people and events outside church. She's there, she's ready to invest, but we pass up the gift—even as our survival depends on it.

Over time, she has to be noticing this. And it has to feel insulting. It would be one thing if our church was hard to break into because we're not good at building community; it's another thing entirely when we're great at it—just not with you.

So what's the solution? I've heard enough about the prodigal son to know that it has something to do with grace. But grace for whom? Already as I write this, I fear I'm coming dangerously close to casting blame on friends—friends whose love sometimes feels more unconditional than the church's.

But I also know that my current priorities are limiting the graciousness of my welcome, hampering my church's growth and robbing future generations.

I don't have an answer to this dilemma yet, but I do ask you to join me in prayer and discernment. God's grace is sufficient for us all. By trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, not ourselves, may we find ourselves—and all parts of our community—truly transformed.

It's as if we enjoy our Mennonite identity so much on Saturday night that we don't have any energy left to bring it to church on Sunday morning.

Find films that challenge stereotypes

While the number of people who see films may be smaller than the number who use other media, films nevertheless affect our cultural conversation. And too often, films present stereotypes that may affect our political and social conversations.

Racial stereotypes are among the most destructive in our society, and these appear too often in the films we watch (not to mention the TV programs we watch).

For example, Charles M. Blow in *The New York Times* (Feb. 26) reports on a National Survey on Drug Use and Health released in mid-February that found young black adults ages 18 to 25 years old “less likely to use illicit drugs than the national average.”

Further, he writes, “a 2007 study of college undergraduates published in the *Journal of Ethnicity and Substance Abuse* found that young blacks' rates of illicit drug use was substantially lower than their counterparts, with black women having the lowest rates of all.”

Unfortunately, the stereotype persists that most African Americans are crack addicts. And the crack-addicted black mother is a particularly pernicious stereotype.

Blow takes African-American filmmaker Tyler Perry to task for promoting this stereotype: “In the last five years, [Perry] has featured a crack-addicted black mother who leaves her children in two of his films and on his very popular sitcom, ‘House of Payne.’ ...In another film, a main character is a drug-addicted prostitute. And in yet another, a mother leaves her family for the drug dealer.”

Among the popular and critically acclaimed films from last year was *Precious*, which was nominated for best film at the Academy Awards and won two Oscars at the March 7 event. (It was also no. 5 on my top 10 list in our February issue.)

This powerful film tells a harrowing story about a young Harlem teenager who is pregnant for the second time by her drug-addicted father and also suffers abuse at the hands of her cruel mother. It goes on to show the courage and fortitude of the title character in overcoming these huge hardships. The film raised much discussion among African-American culture critics; some said it presented a negative stereotype of poor blacks, while others applauded both its realism and its artistic merit.

But at least it presented a serious film made by African Americans about African Americans. That needs to happen more often to make our cultural conversation healthier.

Films can be a good way to expose ourselves to other cultural experiences and thus a way of broadening our awareness of the world around us.

Besides *Precious*, my top 10 list included *Goodbye, Solo*, about a Senegalese man who drives a taxi in North Carolina, and *Sin Nombre*, which follows the journey of a father, daughter and uncle from Honduras toward “el norte.” These films introduce us to a world unfamiliar to us and help us be more empathetic toward people in these situations.

Another stereotype in our society is about Muslims. A Religion News Service story in March by Omar Sacirbey alerts us to *My Name Is Khan*, “a new Hollywood film that has shattered box office records in India and is now making a respectable showing in the United States,” writes Sacirbey. *Khan* is one of “a small but growing number of films shown in the U.S. depicting Muslims positively, or at least as something other than a terrorist,” he writes.

We all need to have our horizons broadened and our stereotypes challenged. TM

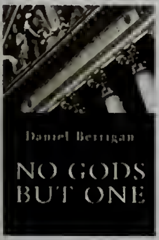
FILM REVIEWS

The Last Station (R) depicts the last months of Russian author Leo Tolstoy's life and dramatizes the struggle between his wife and Tolstoy's followers over who will gain royalties to his work when he dies. While the film strays into cliché with some characters, the fine acting keeps the drama alive.—*Gordon Houser*

The Messenger (R) tells the story of an American soldier who struggles with an ethical dilemma when he becomes involved with a widow of a fallen officer. He is one of two "messengers" who bring news of loved ones deaths in Iraq. This film shows the severe psychological wounds soldiers bring back with them from war zones.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEWS

Daniel Berrigan: Essential Writings, selected and introduced by John Dear (Orbis Books, 2009, $20) presents selections of Berrigan's voluminous writing, much of it poetry. Perhaps known more for his actions for peace (and against war) and his willingness to go to prison for those actions, Berrigan has written poems, essays, a memoir and Bible studies (see below). Dear introduces him as poet, prophet and peacemaker. One is left amazed at Berrigan's consistent message and his incisive creativity.—*gh*



No Gods but One by Daniel Berrigan (Eerdmans, 2009, $15) is a study of Deuteronomy that looks at its darker side. He sees in the book a "war of myths. Prophet versus King" and applies that to our own time, when so many powers, including religious ones, seek to dominate rather then obey God's way of justice. Berrigan's terse style takes getting used to but is worth reading.—*gh*

EVENTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

by Jeanette Baer Showalter

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Online poll sets record with 629 voters:

Should Mennonite schools play the national anthem before sporting events?

No: 80%
Yes: 16%
Not sure: 4%

Note: Online poll results are not statistically reliable as indicators for Mennonite Church USA values.

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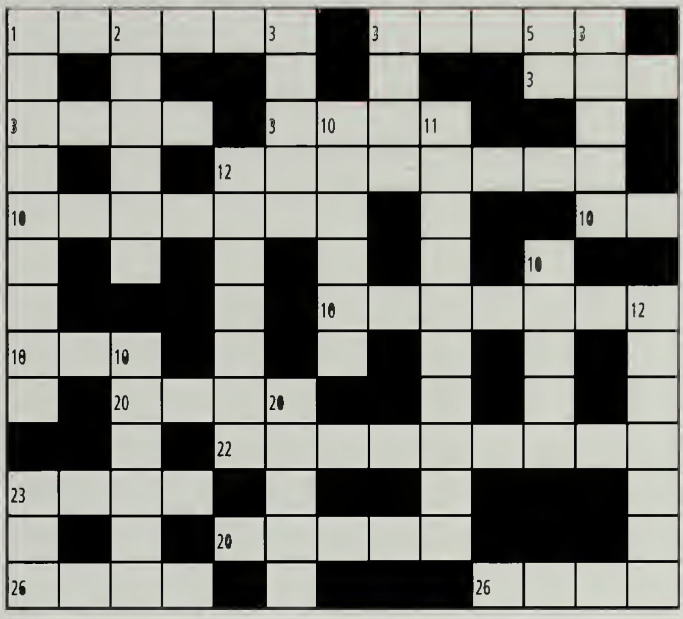
The life and journeys of Paul

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS
1. Birthplace of Paul.
4. Paul calls this companion of Titus a lawyer. (Tit. 3)
7. Paul states, "The sting of death is ___ … " (1 Cor. 15)
8. Time of day when Saul was confronted by the light of Jesus near Damascus. (Acts 22)
9. "Let God be ___ , and every man a liar." (Rom. 3:4)
12. Paul's port of call following both his second and third journeys. (Acts 18:22)
13. Greek philosophers brought Paul before the ____ of the Areopagus. (Acts 17:19, 22)
14. Direction Paul traveled from Ephesus to Caesarea. (abbrev.)
16. Priscilla and Aquila traveled with Paul from Corinth to this place. (Acts 18)
18. Paul quotes Isaiah: "No __ has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."
20. Paul commends Timothy's upbringing by his mother Eunice and his grandmother ___ . (2 Tim. 1)
22. Paul crossed this body of water when he left Corinth and traveled to Asia Minor. (two words)
23. Place of Paul's death.
24. Paul's companion Gaius was from this city near Lystra in Lycaonia. (Acts 20:4)
25. Paul and Barnabus were expelled from Pisidian Antioch and "so they shook the ___ from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium." (Acts 13)
26. Book of the Bible with the account of Paul's journeys.

DOWN
1. Occupation Paul shared with Priscilla and Aquila.
2. Paul stopped at this large island on his third journey when sailing from Cos to Patara.
3. Paul calls the thorn in his flesh "a messenger of ___ ." (2 Cor. 12)
4. When Paul healed a cripple at Lystra the crowd called him Hermes and Barnabus this god.
5. "___ Paul and Barnabus were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath." (Acts 13:42)
6. A companion of Paul on his second journey and imprisoned with him at Philippi. (also called Silvanus).
10. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no ____, but worldly sorrow brings death." (2 Cor. 7:10).
11. This caused the prison cells to spring open when Paul was imprisoned at Philippi. (Acts 16)
12. Region in which Paul was born. (Acts 21 and 22)
15. Paul walked from Troas to this seaport city and met Luke there. (Acts 20:14)
17. Paul and Barnabus, along with John Mark, preached at this city on Cyprus. (Acts 13)
19. Paul struck this sorcerer blind at Paphos. (Acts 13)
21. This many sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest in Ephesus, were trying to cast out demons in the name of Paul and Jesus. (Acts 19)
23. Paul was beaten three times with one of these, stoned once, and three times shipwrecked. (singular) (2 Cor. 11:25)

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our June 2010 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

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RESOURCES

Claiming the Beatitudes: Nine Stories from a New Generation by Anne Sutherland Howard (The Alban Institute, 2009, $17) juxtaposes reflections on each of Jesus' Beatitudes with contemporary stories of students living out those Beatitudes.

Shaking the Tree: New and Selected Poems by Jeanne Lohmann (Fithian Press, 2010, $14) includes several poems published in *The Mennonite.*

The Least of These: Poems by Todd Davis (Michigan State University Press, 2009, $19.95) explores the connection between the visible and invisible worlds. Davis is a Mennonite who has published poetry in *The Mennonite.*

Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Volume I: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking by Ched Myers and Elaine Enns (Orbis Books, 2009, $16) offer a lens for rereading the entire biblical tradition as a resource for the cause of restorative justice and peacemaking.

Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Volume II: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking by Elaine Enns and Ched Myers (Orbis Books, 2009, $20) explores a theology and practice of faith-rooted restorative justice and peacemaking.

Death and Afterlife: A Theological Introduction by Terence Nichols (Brazos Press, 2010, $22.99) addresses contemporary and perennial human questions about death and what lies beyond, making a Christian case for an afterlife with God.

Pentecostal Pacifism: The origin, development and rejection of pacific belief among the Pentecostals by Jay Beaman (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009, $23) is republished 20 years after its initial publication and includes a foreword by John Howard Yoder. Beaman has written a new introduction.

Hiking Through: Finding Peace and Freedom on the Appalachian Trail by Paul V. Stutzman (Synergy Books, 2010, $23.95) recounts Stutzman's five-month hike following the death of his wife to breast cancer.

Pennsylvania German Broadsides, a Reflection of Daily Life 1741-1890 by Trudy E. Gilgenast (Cedar Tree Books, 2010, $75) unravels the experiences of Pennsylvania Germans from 1741 to 1890 through translations of one-sided sheets printed in German. The book is heavily illustrated and includes 12 color pages.

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Martyrs Mirror:
Reflections Across Time

June 8–10, 2010

The conference, marking the 350th anniversary of the first publication of the Anabaptist martyrology *Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians...*, will feature plenary speakers James Lowry, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, Patrick Erben, and Sarah Covington. It will include presentations on spirituality, accounts of women, translation from Dutch to German, history of the first edition in America, and the work's reception among Anabaptist groups, as well as background on author Thieleman van Braght and illustrator Jan Luyken.

For more information or to register,
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First things first Pray for everyone

One of my most humbling experiences in the past months is to have so many people say they are praying for me. I suppose two things have prompted these prayers. First, I have taken up a new and rather visible role in the church. People sense that my task will not be an easy one. Second, many congregations and church agencies responded to the planning committee's invitation to write a prayer of blessing for my formal installation service at Park View Mennonite Church on March 7. I expect to be buoyed up by those prayers for a long time, especially during tough times.

The installation service was much more than recognition of my appointment; it was a celebration of God's work among us—past, present and into the future. I recognize that our work as a church will come to fruition only as it aligns with God's intentions for the world. This understanding lies at the heart of a missional church.

Although we've committed ourselves to become a missional church, I hear plenty of worry that this goal may be beyond our reach. Will we be able to survive our internal differences? Will we be relevant to the next generation?

We will do well to heed the counsel the Apostle Paul once gave to his protege: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness," (1 Timothy 2:1).

Paul's advice was a response to the tough situation that Timothy was facing in his ministry of oversight at Ephesus. Paul clearly believed that the first and proper response to difficulties was to pray, not only for the individuals at the center of the trouble but for all those who surrounded them. His concern stretched even to kings and all those in authority. In this time of anxiety, we can benefit by putting things first—committing ourselves to prayer in a new and deeper way. Let's cultivate a deeper awareness of God and increase our sense of communication with God.

In this vein, I was encouraged by the words of Merrill Moyer at the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board meeting in Hampton, Va., in February. In a devotional reflection, Merrill cited a pastor who said: "If we fail to regularly remember who God is, what he's done, what he's going to do, we will make decisions on the basis of what we can accomplish without him, which restricts us to life of the 'possible.' This leads to discouragement, mediocrity, burnout … and other problems when we lose touch of what God is doing."

At the same board meeting, David Miller, professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., spoke of "tracking God," cultivating the capacity to detect the signs of God's presence and movement among us. This discipline clearly informed Paul's prayers; he wrote expansively of God's work in the world. He prayed with joy for the people at Philippi, full of confidence that God was at work among them (Philippians 1:3-6).

How then shall we pray for each other in the struggles and worries we face as a church? As for me, I feel like I'm still learning how to pray most effectively for others. At times I worry that my prayers simply add to a mountain of requests that arrive as "junk mail" at God's celestial mansion. Yet at other times, I pray with a strong confidence that God already knows what people need and that the Holy Spirit is interceding for them—sometimes with groans too deep for words. I invite us to learn together how to join our own groans with those of God's Spirit, tracking with God's actions in our church and far beyond.

At times I worry that my prayers simply add to a mountain of requests that arrive as "junk mail" in God's celestial mansion.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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At peace with war

Everett J. Thomas

Twenty years ago, our government threatened to start the first Gulf war, then made good on those threats in August 1990. We had the first Gulf War, the Second Gulf War and now the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mennonites now seem to be at peace with these nearly continual wars.

There may be many reasons, and different people may have different reasons. But why are Mennonites not resisting the current wars or protesting military spending? Here are some possible answers:

1. We are comfortably middle class; we don't want to rock the boat that provides the wealth and security we enjoy.

2. We don't know how to protest a distant and "technological war." It was much easier to protest when the draft took the bodies of our young men.

3. We are influenced by postmodernist influences that suggest there is no absolute truth, including the belief that all violence is wrong.

Having made peace with war, our peace convictions may become history.

4. We have become assimilated into the political system and support—or don't want to object to—the rationale provided by the political party of our choice.

5. We see the wars as appropriate "police actions" by the global community against rogue states or lawless cultures.

There has been a lack of energy in Mennonite Church USA around this issue for the past several years. The Delegate Assembly did adopt a resolution against the Iraq War in 2005, and some 17,000 of us signed a letter sent to President Bush in 2002. But now the remnants of a robust peace activism are weekly prayers of peace distributed across the Internet and a few "specialists" helping military members who have become conscientious objectors. Occasionally we also hear from a family that maintains resistance to war by not paying their taxes or see a faithful few stand in a vigil to remind the public.

I'm guessing few Mennonite congregations hear sermons these days that articulate a clear repudiation of the wars our country is fighting. In some places such a sermon may negatively impact a pastor's performance evaluation.

"We believe that peace is the will of God," says Article 22 of *Confession on Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. "God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation and practicing nonresistance even in the face of violence and warfare."

Here at *The Mennonite* we receive many manuscripts for publication; few of them reinforce our church's convictions about war and peace. However, our denomination made a specific commitment in 2005:

"We will renew our commitment to teach peace to every generation and to provide youth with meaningful alternatives to military service," says the Statement on the War in Iraq.

We want to do our part to "teach peace to every generation" and specifically invite writers to submit articles that reinforce our peace convictions. We are particularly interested in articles that connect to current events and elements in popular culture that would be of interest to youth and young adults.

Mennonite Church USA claims to be a historic peace church. Having made peace with war and rumors of wars, we do not want our peace convictions to become history.—*ejt*

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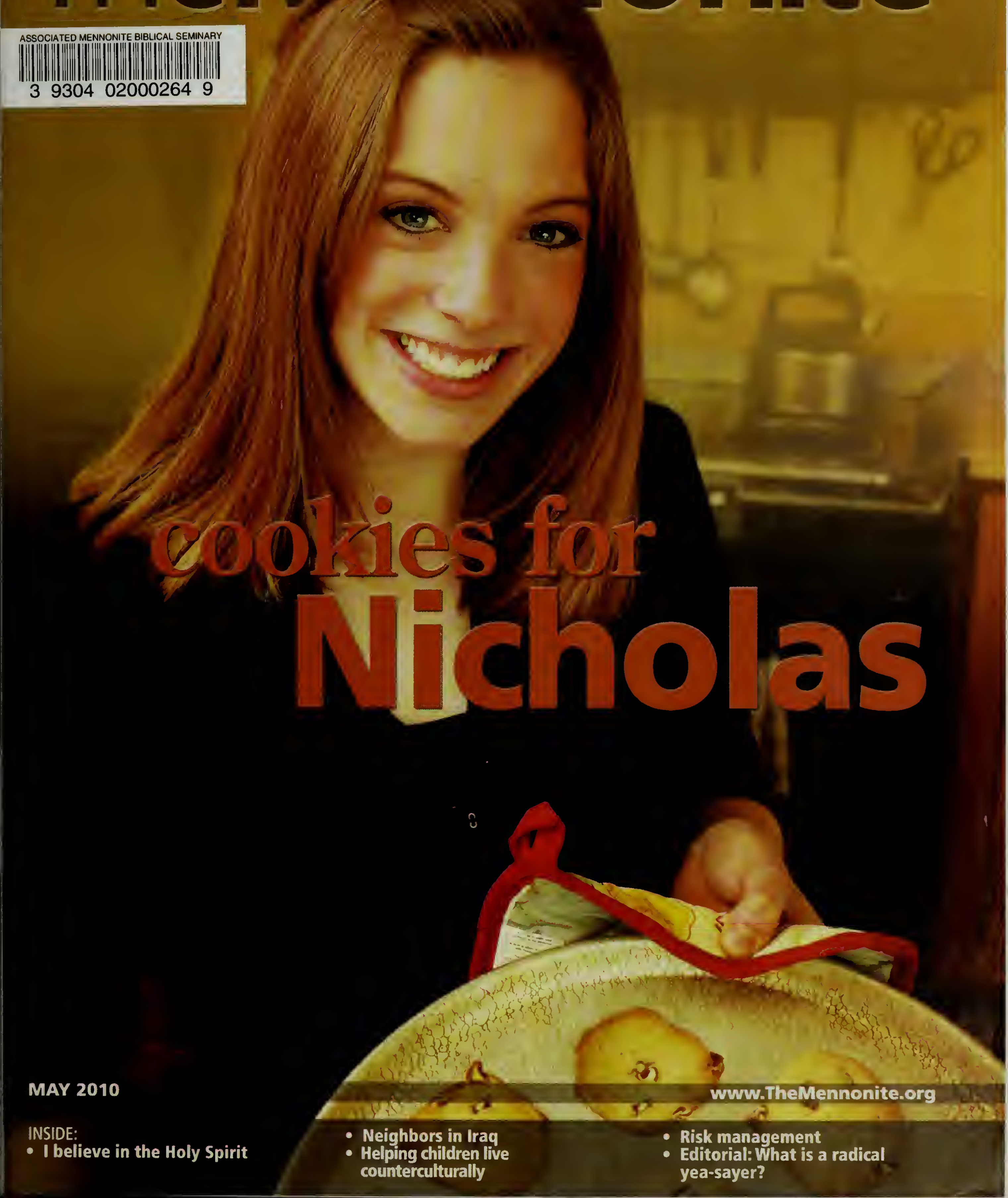

cookies for Nicholas

MAY 2010

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INSIDE:
- I believe in the Holy Spirit
- Neighbors in Iraq
- Helping children live counterculturally
- Risk management
- Editorial: What is a radical yea-sayer?

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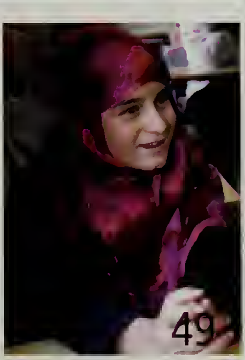

ON THE COVER: Photo by Everett Thomas

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TheMennonite
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The Mennonite is the official publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Nourishment from dissertation

Thank you for the piece on the history of J. Lawrence Burkholder's Princeton dissertation ("Burkholder's Dissertation 'All But Banned,'" March). I vividly recall sitting in the main library of the University of Iowa reading his dissertation on microfilm, which I could order as a graduate student in the mid-1970s. Quickly I realized why his dissertation had not received the seal of approval from the Mennonite establishment of the day and he had been sent into academic exile.

However, I received from his work essential intellectual nourishment, permission and challenge to enter and engage the ambiguous reality of the world in which we actually live as Mennonites while retaining a connection to Anabaptist idealism. I, too, celebrate that Burkholder finally received some long overdue appreciation, however dubious the circumstance.*—John K. Hershberger, Goshen, Ind.*

Article needed balance

Regarding the history of J. Lawrence Burkholder's dissertation ("Burkholder's Dissertation 'All But Banned,'" March), I am willing to let readers decide whether "all but banned" is an accurate headline. But to do so, they need facts.

I tried to set out the facts and a more fruitful interpretation in a chapter of the just-published book *War, Peace, and Social Conscience: Guy F. Hershberger and Mennonite Ethics*—or already in a *Mennonite Quarterly Review* article of January 1999.

In my reading, *The Mennonite*'s revisit of this unfortunate subject relies too much on timeworn lore and myth. The lore may indeed carry a certain portion of truth. However, the word "banned," even qualified with "all but," is loaded. I wish that both the headline and the article showed more effort to find the facts and better balance.*—Theron F. Schlabach, Goshen, Ind.*

The likelihood of conflict

Thank you for the recent article, "Board Considers Conflict Needs" (March). Although I attended only a portion of the Executive Board's meeting, the summary of my input contained in the article could have been confusing to your readers.

First, the research cited was based on my unpublished 2002 master's thesis, which was a comparative case study of conflict over homosexuality within 25 Christian denominations in the United States. The research I conducted at that time examined the effect of three variables—governing structure, organized movements and countermovements, and theological innovation—on the likelihood of conflict over homosexuality within the largest American denominations.

Second, the results of this research were more nuanced than the article reflected. As my thesis concluded, "the only sufficient combination of causes (of high-intensity conflict leading to possible schism) is the presence of strong movements and countermovements combined with no history of early ordination of women." In other words, it was the combination of currently well-organized advocacy movements (both in favor of and opposed to the full inclusion of gays and lesbians) and the failure to ordain women prior to World War II that most strongly predicted conflict over homosexuality in these denominations. Developments since 2002 have also provided support for the hypothesis that more centralized denominations are experiencing greater conflict intensity over this issue than more decentralized ones.

Third, the quote attributed to me, "When the center doesn't hold, you end up with a Northern Ireland," was made when the discussion had turned to polarization in the broader society rather than in the church.—*David Brubaker, Harrisonburg, Va.*

The passing of Gene Stoltzfus

I was a colleague with Gene ("CPT Founder Stoltzfus Dies," April). He was leading the Mennonite Voluntary Service program for General Conference Mennonite Church while I worked with the Mennonite Board of Mission's Voluntary Service program. His death is sad news.—*Rick Stiffney, Goshen, Ind.*

After receiving the sad news of Gene's passing, I wrote and sent a letter to our national ARROWS (Alliance to Resist Robotic Warfare & Society) list. In honoring Gene's decades of incredible service, it is worth noting the important but perhaps little-known role he played in the final year of his life, helping cofound ARROWS, a new national and international network of concern and nonviolent resistance to the rise of the robotic warfare system in the 21st century.

In sorrow at Gene's passing and joy at the gift of his amazing life.—*Peter Lumsdaine, Boise, Idaho*

Cannot know timetable

I resonate with much of what Myron Augsburger says in "A Paracosmic Millennium" (March). I affirm his call to recognize the biblical emphasis on the kingdom of God as both present already and still future. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles consistently urge followers during this interim—between "already" and "not yet"—to live their lives in accord with the values of God's still in-breaking reign.

However, I am troubled by Augsburger's plea to place more attention on Jesus' return. He laments that we no longer argue about various views of the "millennium."

"In discussing our differences," Augsburger writes, "we were at least giving attention to this mystery." I find his use of the term "mystery" intriguing. In Scripture it occurs predominantly to refer to "that which God reveals" rather than "a riddle to be solved."

Discussions about eschatology have typically deteriorated into shouting matches about how to solve the riddle created by snipping Bible verses out of their contexts and then reassembling them in conformity to each interpreter's schema. What we need instead is humble attentiveness within the community of faith to what God has revealed climactically in Christ, as attested in the Scriptures.

One particular problem with Augsburger's argument is his discussion of the Greek word "telos," which he defines as "an ultimate end." Telos (and the English word "end") can refer to chronology (cessation, termination) or to the goal or desired outcome (consummation) of God's work within salvation history.

A careful contextual reading of 1 Corinthians 15:24 argues for the latter meaning (telos/end as goal rather than cessation). What is destroyed when the kingdom is transferred to the Father is not the world but "every rule and authority and power."

My disquiet about this article arises especially in the assumption that we as humans can somehow

(continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

I remember weeping with Dale Stoltzfus when he shared the news that his 6-month-old grandson had died. That was June 6, 1992; we were colleagues at the Mennonite Board of Congrgational Ministries, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) had not touched the life of anyone I knew.

Four months ago we learned that Nicolas Stoltzfus' twin sister, Kate, was ready to write about her life without Nick. Her reflections (page 12) are our cover story in this issue.

In his article on Pentecost (page 17), Isaac Villegas describes the miracle of communion that emerged from that fire from heaven.

"Eating together and praying together … is dangerous because you can't choose who you want to invite," Villegas says.

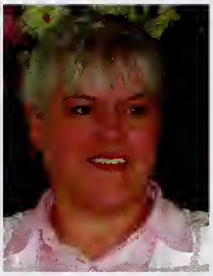
Weldon Nisly (page 20) describes a reunion in Iraq, where he was injured in 2003, and the discovery of the man in Rutba who carried him to an ambulance.

The News Brief section includes a report of Mennonite Central Committee partners being attacked on March 20 and the sad conclusion to Joe Rosa's life (page 8).

The news section introduces the new name for Mennonite Mutual Aid, which prefers to be called MMA. Later this fall, MMA will become Everence (page 37). We also reprint a heartwarming story about a Kansas youth group from which six pastors emerged (page 38).

For the past two years, we have held a photograghy contest so that our designer would have fresh photos for her designs. In this issue we publish three of the entries submitted in the 2009 contest: photo illustrations on pages 23 and 30 and a photo on page 26.—*Editor*

Preparing for Pittsburgh



Donna Mast serves half-time as a pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church and half-time as interim conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

Mennonite Church USA Convention is an every-other-year event. A year ago I had the joy of serving as co-coordinator for the prayer team of Columbus 2009. It was hard work, precious work, rewarding work. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve in this way and to see the convention from a different viewpoint from my usual delegate spot.

In this year between conventions, I have been given an opportunity to see Mennonite Church USA Convention from still another point of view. I am one of 12 volunteers serving on the adult planning committee. Another group of 12 volunteers serves on the youth planning committee. Both committees also have coordinators, Executive Leadership and convention staff members.

At this writing, we have met twice and will meet twice more. The first meeting was a joint one of the two committees. We spent 2½ days together exploring Scripture, experiencing the Pittsburgh setting where the next convention will be held, reflecting on our church and convention experiences and listening for the Spirit's leading in the midst of it all. Just 30 minutes before the scheduled end of our first meeting together, suddenly it all came together.

As we recognized that we were in agreement, we knew God's Spirit had led us to the 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 text and the "Bridges to (the) Cross" theme for Pittsburgh 2011.

We knew God's Spirit had led us to the 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 text and the "Bridges to (the) Cross" theme for Pittsburgh 2011.

I was not a part of the youth planning committee, so I can only describe what happened at the adult planning sessions. At these sessions, we decided upon daily worship themes and thought about possible worship leaders and speakers. Again, we felt God's Spirit working through us and among us as we discussed and planned.

As we worked at theme-setting and worship planning, we had glimpses into other areas of planning for convention. For instance, did you know that convention staff negotiates with hotels in the area surrounding the convention center for lower room rates, which include rebates that cover the costs of renting the convention center?

They also do a taste test of the meals that will be served to convention-goers who buy the meal plan. Granted, meals prepared for a few cannot taste exactly like the meals prepared for thousands. But they do their best to ensure the meals will be tasty, wholesome and meet the dietary needs of many, many people.

An agreement to purchase the meal plans also serves to lower the cost for using the facility—and therefore registration costs for convention-goers—while giving people a safe and handy option for fueling their bodies throughout the week. At Pittsburgh, meals served at the David Lawrence Convention Center will include produce actually grown on the rooftop of our meeting space. You can't get more local and fresh than that.

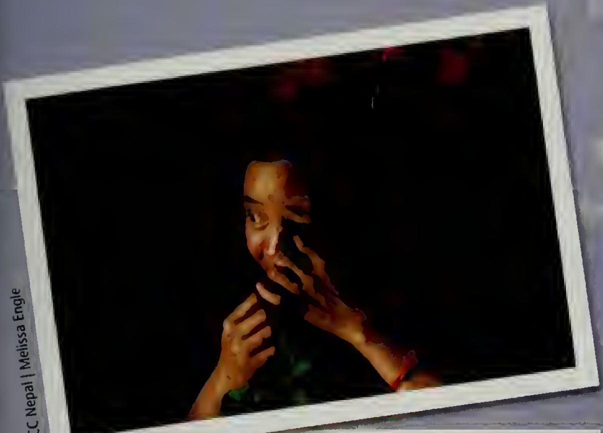
Mennonite Church USA Convention is a wonderful opportunity to view a picture of the denomination—much larger, broader and more diverse than our local congregations and area conferences. It is not the entire picture and cannot be. But it has potential to be a larger picture if those who are able practice some mutual aid.

What if every congregation within driving distance chose to be a partner with a congregation that feels challenged financially to send delegates and/or participants because of distance and limited funds? What if youth groups set aside 10 percent (or more) of their fund-raising efforts to be a partner with a resource-challenged youth group so those youth could have the experience, too?

What if relationships were established even before meeting in Pittsburgh because of the contacts made to talk about mutual aid? Those who offer assistance could well discover how generous the gifts are that they receive back from those congregations in need. What is already a grand picture could be made even grander as we come together to worship, learn and discern.

We have opportunities ahead of us as well as challenges. We will come from different places and experiences, bringing a variety of expectations and desires, to worship the same Lord. Will we be able to see the face of Jesus in those we meet? Will we recognize the heart of Jesus in those with whom we disagree?

I hope and pray that as we celebrate, discern, worship and learn together, God's Spirit will be made glad in our love for one another and devotion to God. TM


MCC Nepal | Melissa Engle

MCC Mozambique | Matthew Lester

MCC Burundi/Rwanda | Brandon Thiessen

MCC Sudan | Melissa Engle

MCC Haiti | Ben Depp

Tattered veil in the wind

by Catherine Swanson

Are you able to tell us how you counted
your family's meal, grain by grain,
having dragged your pot to the truck and back?
And after boiling up and stirring,
after setting it to cool, and each one dips
his fingers in, will you show us how you used
part of your own dress to wipe the pot clean?

You've walked all night with bare feet,
murmuring to the little ones: Hush, quickly now,
you must leave your toys, your pet.

Even the strongest have only two hands.
Do you cover their eyes
or their ears? Which child do you hold,
when you are empty and they are stunned?
How do you do this and sing them to sleep
on the ground in a ragged tent, your voice breaking only
when the journalists arrive?

A woman is always a woman in the world—
holding the cries of her startled sons and daughters.
You are never restful, never safe,
and weary in the unremitting way
no camera lens, no printed page can share.
How much grit and sting will have to blast
from a treeless condition before we can feel
what you must know:
that someone out there wants it this way.

Catherine Swanson lives in Indianapolis.

MCC partners in Congo injured in attack

AKRON, Pa.—Staff members of a Mennonite Central Committee partner organization in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were injured when their vehicle was ambushed by armed men March 20. The group of six men and women was returning to the city of Bukavu in South Kivu province after visiting a site designated for a humanitarian aid project in cooperation with MCC. They work with the Ministry for Refugees and Emergencies, a department of the Church of Christ in Congo, which is known by its French acronym ECC. ECC is a national council of churches that includes Congolese Mennonites. The men and women were beaten, slashed with knives and robbed before being released. The two women in the group were hospitalized with knife cuts and serious bruises.—*MCC*

Joe Rosa found dead by apparent suicide

PITTSBURGH—The body of former pastor Joe Rosa was found in a wooded-area in Union County, Pa., on April 1. Police officers say his death was a result of self-hanging, or suicide. Rosa, former pastor of Congregacion Menonita Shalom, New Columbia, Pa., left his home in May 2009, and police searches failed to locate him.

According to the *Standard Journal* of Milton, the body was found about one mile from Rosa's home. Last June, police charged him with indecent assault, alleging he molested boys between 2005 and 2009. Congregacion Menonita Shalom is a church plant of Community Mennonite Fellowship, Milton, Pa.

On April 6, pastor of Community Mennonite David Martino said a memorial service was planned for April 17 at Revival Tabernacle in Watsontown, Pa. "We're looking for it to be a healing event for the family," Martino said. "It's just a shock to people who knew Joe and were mentored by him. We want to give a balanced picture of what Joe's done in our community."
—*Anna Groff with reports from Associated Press*

MVS signs agreement with Selective Service System

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—On April 21, Mennonite Voluntary Service was to become the first faith-based service organization recognized by the United States Selective Service System as a member of the Alternative Service Employer Network (ASEN) for conscientious objectors. The signing was to take place at the San Antonio Mennonite Church.

This event marked the first ASEN signing in 25 years. The signing means that if a military draft is ever reinstated, MVS is an officially recognized agency capable of hosting alternative service workers or conscientious objectors.—*MMN*

Everett J. Thomas

Goshen plays anthem

Goshen (Ind.) College students and spectators protested the inaugural playing of the national anthem at the baseball opener on March 23 by remaining seated. Others stood for the anthem.—*Everett J. Thomas*

CPT reservist arrested

TUCSON, Ariz.—At the Aerospace and Arizona Days military exhibition on the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base on March 21, two Tucson residents were arrested for trespassing. Christian Peacemaker Teams reservist John Heid, 55, and Gretchen Nielsen, 77, unfurled a banner declaring, "War is Not a Show." The Tucson city police took the pair to the Pima County Jail, where they were processed and released by 10 p.m. They were scheduled to appear in Tucson City Court for arraignment: Heid on April 29 and Nielsen on April 30.—*CPT*

MARP to discontinue as church agency

GOSHEN, Ind.—The board of the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons has decided to discontinue MARP as a church agency, effective June 30. However, all of MARP's current activities will continue to be offered to its members through other church organizations. The board made the decision during its fall 2009 meeting.

The board and staff, after reviewing trends related to Baby Boomers and aging during the past year, determined that MARP has fulfilled its mission. Executive director Jay Roth says, "Baby Boomers seem to have an aversion to the concept of retirement. They are choosing to work in some cases because of an uncertain economy. Research indicates that work will be a more significant part of their later years than it was for previous generations."

Stuart Showalter, chair of the

MARP board, says these factors—and no doubt additional ones—have contributed to a decline in interest in MARP's activities and a shrinking membership base during the past decade. He says budgetary considerations and an overall attempt to consolidate programs spurred the decision to turn MARP's program activities over to other Mennonite organizations. Roth will serve as executive director part-time through June.—*MARP*

Conference names steering committee

HARLEYSVILLE, Pa.—The board of Franconia Mennonite Conference has named a conference review steering committee to provide oversight for the assessment being performed by consultant LaVern Yutzy.

In early March, Franconia Conference announced plans to dismiss most of the conference staff. Then on March 15, the conference board announced those plans will be put on hold while an in-depth review of the conference is undertaken.

The process is designed to review the role, structure and staffing of Franconia, clarifying issues around the March events and underlying concerns while not intending to answer all questions. The conference will send postcards with response questions to all congregations and delegates, encouraging feedback by April 24. The conference review steering committee will develop a potential process for reviewing the recommendations and a path for decision-making. The report is expected to be available to the board and delegates in mid-May.—*Franconia Conference*

MMA responds to health-care reform

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Mutual Aid responded on March 23 to the passage of federal health-care reform, noting that the legislation generally supports the goals outlined in the Health Care Policy principles adopted in 2007 by Mennonite Church USA.

"Members can remain confident in their coverage and continue to expect the customary high level of service they receive from their MMA plans," said Evan Bontrager, vice president of insurance products. "The general objectives of the reform do not conflict with the faith-based principles that MMA supports—including fairness to those who lack the resources for health-care security. The legislation appears to maintain support and funding for Medicare and we will continue to provide additional coverage through our Medicare Supplement products." Some aspects of the law will go into effect soon—while other significant changes will occur after 2014.—*MMA*

Jennifer Warkentine

Volunteers build shed at Camp Mennoscah

Mike Goossen, Marv Goossen, Rodney Ensz and other workers from First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, Neb., work at Camp Mennoscah March 23. Seven volunteers, aided by Mennonite Voluntary Service worker Michael Unruh and maintenance coordinator Torrey Ball, spent several days in early spring at the camp near Kingman, Kan., pouring concrete for and building a sports shed near the ball diamond to replace one that was destroyed by fire last fall.—*June Galle Krehbiel*

Peace Institute closes

INDIANAPOLIS—The board of directors of Indianapolis Peace Institute (formerly Indianapolis Peace House), the 6-year-old inner-city collaboration of Indiana's three historic peace colleges, announced that the Institute would discontinue its on-site student programming as of March 31. The economic downturn has put an unbearable burden on the nonprofit project of Earlham, Goshen and Manchester colleges.

Nearly 100 Indianapolis organizations have benefitted from the service learning of Peace Institute students, said Kim Overdyck, executive director. The board of directors has placed the house on the market.—*Indianapolis Peace Institute*

Zwier wins C. Henry Smith contest at Goshen

GOSHEN, Ind.—David Zwier from the Dominican Republic won first place with his speech "Facing Food Waste: The Truth About What We Don't Eat" in the Goshen (Ind.) College's annual C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest on Feb. 9. The runner up was Kayla Hooley, Peoria, Ariz. Her speech was entitled "Media Influences On Body Image: How The Media Shapes Our Minds And Divides Society."—*Goshen College*

Saving U.S. water and sewer systems would be costly

Today, a significant water line bursts on average every two minutes somewhere in the country, according to a *New York Times* analysis of Environmental Protection Agency data. In Washington alone there is a pipe break every day, on average.

State and federal studies indicate that thousands of water and sewer systems may be too old to function properly.

For decades, these systems—some built around the time of the Civil War—have been ignored by politicians and residents accustomed to paying almost nothing for water delivery and sewage removal. And so each year, hundreds of thousands of ruptures damage streets and homes and cause dangerous pollutants to seep into drinking water supplies.

George S. Hawkins's answer to such problems will not please a lot of citizens. Like many of his counterparts in cities like Detroit, Cincinnati, Atlanta and elsewhere, his job is partly to persuade the public to accept higher water rates, so that the utility can replace more antiquated pipes.

"People pay more for their cellphones and cable television than for water," says Hawkins, who before taking over Washington's water system ran environmental groups and attended Princeton and Harvard, where he never thought he would end up running a sewer system.

"You can go a day without a phone or TV," he says. "You can't go a day without water."

But in many cities, residents have protested loudly when asked to pay more for water and sewer services. In Los Angeles, Indianapolis, Sacramento—and before Hawkins arrived, Washington—proposed rate increases have been scaled back or canceled after virulent ratepayer dissent.

Hawkins says the average age of the Washington's water pipes is 76, nearly four times that of the oldest city bus. He describes how old pipes have spilled untreated sewage into rivers near homes.

In the last year, federal lawmakers have allocated more than $10 billion for water infrastructure programs, one of the largest such commitments in history.

But Hawkins and others say that even those outlays are almost insignificant compared with the problems they are supposed to fix. An E.P.A. study last year estimated that $335 billion would be needed simply to maintain the nation's tap water systems in coming decades. In states like New York, officials estimate that $36 billion is needed in the next 20 years just for municipal wastewater systems.

"We're relying on water systems built by our great-grandparents, and no one wants to pay for the decades we've spent ignoring them," says Jeffrey K. Griffiths, a professor at Tufts University and a member of the E.P.A.'s National Drinking Water Advisory Council.

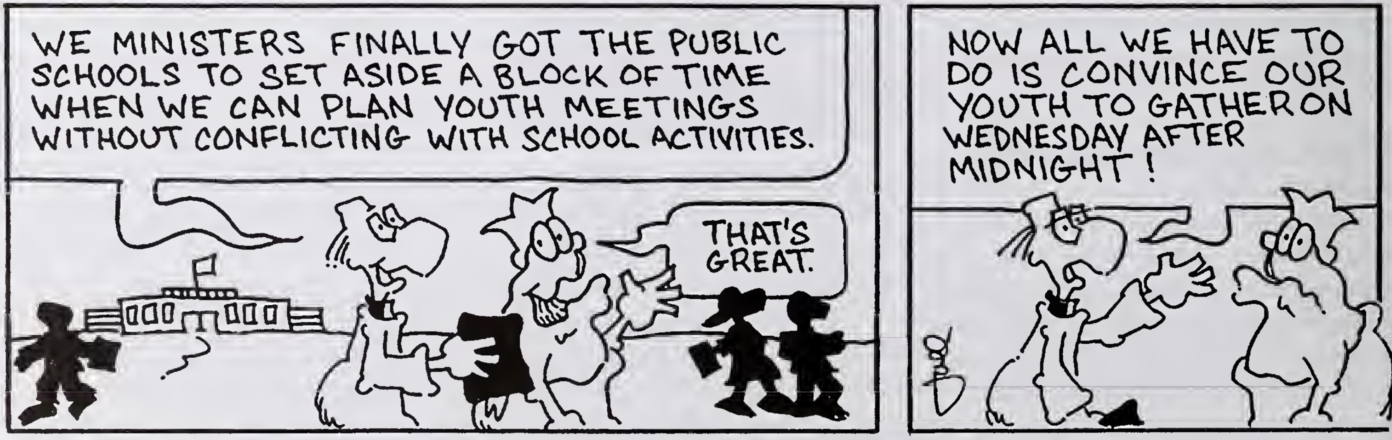
"There's a lot of evidence that people are getting sick," he says. "But because everything is out of sight, no one really understands how bad things have become."—*Charles Duhigg in* The New York Times

Death by water

More people die from polluted water every year than from all forms of violence, including war, the United Nations said in a report March 22 that highlights the need for clean drinking water. The report said an estimated 2 billion tons of waste water—including fertilizer run-off, sewage and industrial waste—is being discharged daily. That waste fuels the spread of disease and damages ecosystems.—*AP*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


WE MINISTERS FINALLY GOT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO SET ASIDE A BLOCK OF TIME WHEN WE CAN PLAN YOUTH MEETINGS WITHOUT CONFLICTING WITH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.
THAT'S GREAT.
NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS CONVINCE OUR YOUTH TO GATHER ON WEDNESDAY AFTER MIDNIGHT!

> "Avoid the term "global warming." I prefer the term "global weirding" because that is what actually happens as global temperatures rise and the climate changes. The weather gets weird. The hots are expected to get hotter, the wets wetter, the dries drier and the most violent storms more numerous.—*Thomas Friedman in* The New York Times"

More praying, fewer staying

The number of Americans who are praying is increasing at the same time that more of them say they have no formal religious affiliation, according to a major polling organization. "We are witnessing a decoupling of 'spirituality' from 'religion,'" says Omar M. McRoberts, a University of Chicago sociologist and researcher. The University of Chicago study, released last October, was based on numerous surveys, including the General Social Survey's own study of 52,000 U.S. adults. According to the study, 22 percent of Americans have never attended a religious service, up from 9 percent in 1972. However, the study found that the number of adults practicing daily prayer rose from 52 percent in a 1989-90 survey to 59 percent now.—*The Christian Century*

20-40

Percent of homeless youth who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, according to a 2007 study—the *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*

How giving hurts

After the genocide in Rwanda, writes Peter Greer in *The Poor Will Be Glad: Joining the Revolution to Life the World Out of Poverty*, Jean seized an opportunity to begin a small poultry business to provide his neighborhood with eggs. Later, a church in America "adopted" the village where Jean lived and worked. The church donated clothes and supplies and imported eggs from a neighboring community and gave them away. The market price for eggs plummeted in Jean's village, and Jean was forced to sell his productive assets, his chickens. The next year, after Jean had left the poultry business, the church that had supplied the free eggs turned its attention to another disaster in another part of the world. Jean's community was forced to import eggs from a neighboring town. The cost of these eggs was higher than the eggs Jean had sold, so both Jean and his village were hurt economically by the good intentions of one American church.
—*The Marketplace*

Seniors and drugs

- Percentage of U.S. seniors who take five or more prescription drugs daily: **51**
- Percentage of those who do not feel knowledgeable enough about the drugs they're prescribed or their potential side effects: **34**—*Yes! Magazine*

Foreign workers boost economy

In a National Bureau of Economic Research working paper, economist Giovanni Peri trowels through nearly five decades of immigration data and finds that foreign workers have boosted the U.S. economy, jacking up average income without crowding out American laborers. For each percentage of the workforce that is foreign-born, he found an almost 0.5 percent bump in average wages. Immigrants, Peri says, push native-born workers into better-paying positions, expanding the size of the job pie so unskilled Americans aren't left out.—*Newsweek*

10 largest U.S. Christian bodies

1. The Catholic Church: 68.1 million, up 1.49 percent

2. Southern Baptist Convention: 16.2 million, down 0.24 percent

3. The United Methodist Church: 7.8 million (U.S.), down 0.98 percent

4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 5.9 million (U.S.), up 1.71 percent

5. The Church of God in Christ: 5.5 million, no change

6. National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc: 5 million, no change

7. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: 4.6 million, down 1.62 percent

8. National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.: 3.5 million, no change

9. Assemblies of God: 2.9 million, up 1.27 percent

10. Presbyterian Church (USA): 2.8 million, down 3.3 percent—*2010 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches*

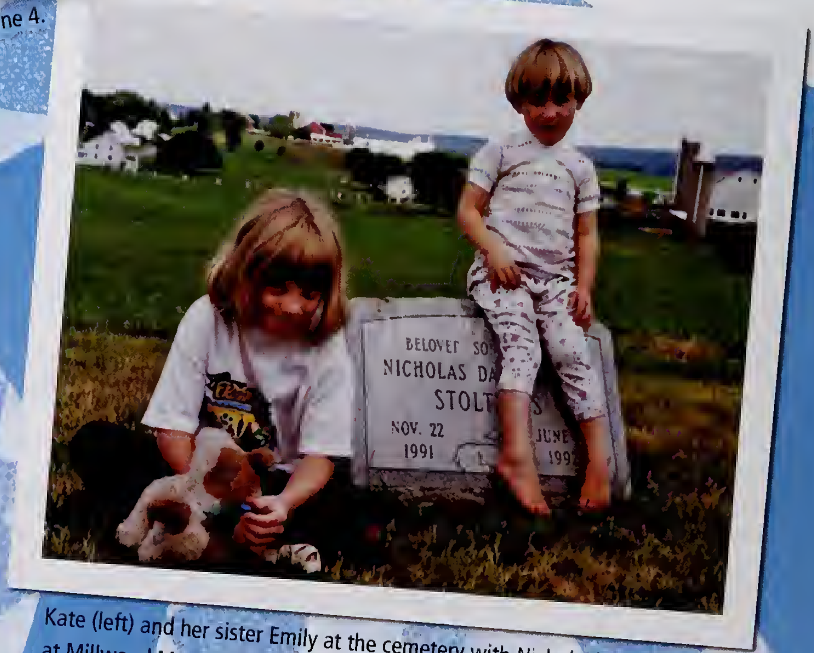
A sister reflects on the death of her twin brother when they were babies.

Cookies for Nicholas

by Kate Sherer Stoltzfus

The photos are precious and few, spread across the lap of an old quilt. Several stick with me, worn around the edges, more faded than all the rest. One I've folded and tucked deep inside my jacket pocket, a frozen moment warmed in the palm of my hand.

The twins in May 1992. Nicholas (right) died on June 4.
Photo provided



Kate (left) and her sister Emily at the cemetery with Nicholas' tombstone at Millwood Mennonite Church near Gap, Pa. Photo provided

Pregnant in Ireland: There is my mother, standing gorgeously young in a way I'll never know her. The hills of Ireland billow around her, not quite as bright as the smile sewn to her cheeks. She is resplendent, the picture of a young traveler with her hands resting on the great swell of her belly. My brother and I are there with her, carried close to her, though we can't be seen. I look at that picture and can't help thinking how happy my parents were—so vibrant and young, so untouched by life's misery. The photo has preserved something time has undone.

There on the quilt, amid all the framed images of baby smiles, lips laced with milk, and two yawning twins in that bulky double stroller, a picture catches the eye and says more than any sentence could.

At my brother's grave: The photo shows the passing of time. I have been transported to the warmth of my mother's lap, again pulled close and swallowed by rolling farmland. We both squint against an invisible wind, my face turned from the camera. It is hard to tell whether my mother squints from this wind or from something else unseen, but when you follow her glance, her expression becomes more traceable. We are a bundle of love beside a headstone unweathered by time; a baby lamb has been erected across the front. My brother is there with us, too, but this time he is the only one who cannot be seen. I am alive and well, a rambunctious 2-year-old, and he is there in the solid granite we lean against; in the trees, in the sky and in us, too.

To learn the story of my brother, I had to retrace many steps. For me, it's like the past was erased, a page torn from the book of my life before I got a chance to read it. I was a drooling 6-month-old when my twin brother Nicholas passed away from SIDS.

For the majority of my life I've felt far removed from the event. I have no memories of him, only the pictures in my head, which have been conjured from the words of others rather than real life. I wish I was able to remember so that I could feel something other than indifference. I've grown up without him, unable to miss him because his absence is the only thing I've ever known. But in some distant way I've felt a longing to know who he was.

As a tiny girl falling asleep under the sheets, I would make a tent with the moon coming in and think all sorts of things about my long-lost brother. Did he have a pillow underground? Did he eat? I couldn't imagine it. I would whisper that I missed him and that if he were here, we could eat buckets of waffles and throw bread to the ducks. I'd even share my tire swing. I imagined a best friend. Though I have no memory today of those late-night thoughts, I must have felt on some unconscious level that part of me was missing. I had a brother who was gone and I wanted him back. I put his picture by my bed and wrote him letters in crayon.

Yet it seemed to be a phase I went through, this wanting Nicholas. He soon became just another wayward thought in my head, stored away and almost forgotten. After I was given a baby sister to play with, as I started school and slowly began to grow up, real life was better. Nicholas slid easily to the sidelines of my mind.

I had a brother who was gone and I wanted him back. I put his picture by my bed and wrote him letters in crayon.

We were born as a pair, so it was only natural to have a fondness for things in twos. We were twins, born two months early, requiring a two-month stay in the ICU at St. Vincent's Hospital. We were not yet ready for the world but came into it anyway, wrinkled and wizened with arms and legs as fragile as eggshells. We squinted in the lights of the incubator helping keep our tiny bodies warm. The nurses knew us by name and cheered each time we gained an ounce.

After we put on six pounds, our bodies finally slipping into healthy coats of skins, we were ready for the world. In our case, the planet expanded minimally; brought home to a closet-sized Brooklyn apartment, the space was cozy and crowded and did nothing to mask our cries. My parents took turns going out to the dim hallway to sleep, where the noise of screaming babies was at least somewhat muffled. The kitchen, visible from the bedroom, was crammed with an endless stream of relatives and friends who stopped by to help out. Mom got used to feeding a baby in each arm, cradling the phone against her shoulder as we squirmed.

As twins, Nicholas and I shared many things: a zoo's worth of stuffed animals, a lacy bassinet, a double stroller that took weeks to find. We discovered each other one day, realizing our worlds overlapped, and spent hours with eyes locked. ▶

Tangling hands and feet, we were in amazement at the solidity of the presence of someone else. It was a wonder to have someone so close, to learn each other by sight and touch rather than with words. It was as if our happiness suddenly depended on the other one being there, too.

Although we were twins, Nicholas was a boy all his own. Whenever I ask now what he was like, people are always sure to mention his smile. He could light up a room with his grin. It was a smile that would come in handy one day, that kind you put on after stealing a cookie or pinching your sister. He had everyone in the palm of his baby hand. It is still a mystery why we had to do without this smile; why he had to go.

The morning of June 4 began like any other morning. The day was unashamedly hot, devoid of clouds, steam rising from the streets. Windows were open, dogs were walked and worn out, a paper slid under our door. It was an ordinary day, summer in the city with the buildings shimmering. My parents went to work—my mother's reluctant fourth day back—and a babysitter stayed with us in their absence. I wonder if we were fussy that morning, if we were hot. We drank our bottles in the shade of a park, Nicholas and I sharing a swing with our backs against one another and overfed pigeons scuttling beneath us. We wore laceup shoes, and our hair came in waves now. We were getting big.

He had everyone in the palm of his baby hand. It is still a mystery why we had to do without this smile; why he had to go.

After the park was naptime, sleep a relief after chattering crowds. Maria put us down with our stuffed hippos, drawing the shades, following a familiar routine as we yawned milky yawns and closed our eyes.

When my mother came in the door, setting down her briefcase, I was crying. She brought me out to the kitchen so I wouldn't wake Nicholas. He did not stir as she lifted me from my blankets. Babies cry all the time; I was probably just hungry, maybe needed a change. But I can't help thinking I must have known something my parents did not.

Nicholas in his grandfather's arms. Photo provided

This is where I switch to autopilot. I cannot identify or even try to picture the way my father, home for dinner, went to wake Nicholas, his work shoes scuffing the floor, printer ink still on his hands. If he had only known what was coming, he might have walked more slowly. Dad anticipated a hungry boy waiting for him in the bedroom, gumming a smile as he woke from his sheets.

Instead, the heat from my brother's sleeping body slowly grew cold, and he did not wake.

I can't imagine what my dad must have been thinking as he ran down the pavement with his little boy clutched in his arms. Deep down, he already knew the worst. Yet with each step came the reminder that the solidity of our life was still there and it must not be disturbed. He only had to reach the hospital and everything would be OK.

If only life were kinder. Instead, the lives of my parents and my life, too, were about to change. The hospital confirmed what my parents already knew: Nicholas would never wake up.

In the middle of our darkest time, when nothing seemed right or true or even real, my family was surrounded by the support of many people. I still cried and wanted food; my cloth diapers still had to be changed. My parents had to go on with normal as best they could, when everything was so far from it. When my brother's body needed to be transported across state lines to the countryside, my great uncle was there to take him. There were cards and calls and food from down the block, a circle of waiting arms where grief could begin and comfort taken. It was all there for us, a community of love in a time of need.

The funeral had white roses, lovely music, the smallest casket many had ever seen. A crowd of people showed up to mourn my brother, and I joined them, held by my mother and dressed in blue. I was quiet in her lap, sleeping while someone gave a testimony and others lit candles. It was only during the last song, "Children of the Heavenly Father," that I cried. It wasn't even a cry; I was wailing, mourning my brother, who should have been next to me, should have been cradled safely in what was now empty space on my mother's lap. Two weeks later, at a cousin's funeral, I cried during the same song. Some things cannot be explained. Was I sad? Did I realize? A baby's grief is hard to understand.

My parents buried Nicholas while the sun was out. It felt too wrong with the light mingling in the dirt, a pretty day for something so bleak, but there they were. He was laid on a hilltop overlooking the swell of gorgeous fields. Cows walked leisurely along the fence, and wildflowers grew rampant. Since that day, a barn has been erected in the distance. Plows hum with the heat, corn grows fierce and tall; life moves on.

Karen, Duane and their twin children. Photo provided

It has been a long time since Nicholas went away. Long enough for me to forget I was ever a twin, long enough for it to seem normal. The pictures hide in a box collecting dust. On the rare occasion I do look at them, I find it hard to believe that the gurgling baby with her hands curled into fists and staring intently at the brother beside her was me.

But Nicholas is aimed right at the camera in his wrinkled sailor suit, smiling one of those precious grins at the person behind the lens. This is how I choose to see him. I don't dwell on why he died, why it was him instead of me. There are no answers to these questions.

I don't dwell on why he died, why it was him instead of me. There are no answers to these questions.

I do not ask for sympathy. I am merely telling my brother's story. I tell it for my parents. I tell it in the hope of figuring out some piece of myself.

Nicholas' death has taught me, as clichéd as it is, not to take life for granted. He has missed out on all my favorite things in this world; he will never eat a chocolate chip cookie still gooey from the oven, never hear the climax of a symphony. He will never get to breathe in air so cold it stings or dive headfirst into a hot summer pool. For Nicholas, I enjoy everything twice as much. I try to smile the way I think he would have. I eat two cookies and hug my parents extra hard.

I look across the cafeteria at twins giggling over lunch, so close and so real with that visible bond, and I smile. We might have had that. I will never know, and that's OK. I'm content to imagine we would and leave it at that.

I see us at a crossroads with the light coming down hard; I am on the brink of something new, a high school senior about to step out into a beckoning world. And I see Nicholas with that silly smile; he raises a hand to wave and it's as if he's saying, "See you later." Until then, Nick, I love you, and I'm letting you go.

For Nicholas, I enjoy everything twice as much. I try to smile the way I think he would have. I eat two cookies and hug my parents extra hard.

Kate Sherer Stoltzfus attends College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and is a senior at Goshen High School. She is the daughter of Duane and Karen Stoltzfus. Her grandparents are Dale and Doris Stoltzfus, Lancaster, Pa., and Lon and Kathryn Sherer, Goshen.

Kate at the piano. Photo by Everrett J. Thomas

What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age that remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene and review of the clinical history.

Facts about SIDS

- SIDS is the leading cause of death in the United States among infants between 1 month and 1 year of age.
- Most SIDS deaths occur between 2 and 4 months of age.
- SIDS occurs more often in boys than in girls (approximately a 60- to 40-percent male-to-female ratio).
- African-American babies are more than twice as likely to die of SIDS as white babies.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native babies are nearly three times as likely to die of SIDS as white babies.
- About one in five SIDS deaths occur while an infant is in the care of someone other than a parent.
- Babies used to sleeping on their backs who are placed to sleep on their tummies are 18 times more likely to die from SIDS.
- A SIDS death leaves a family with an urgent need to understand what happened. Lack of a discernible cause, the suddenness of the death and possible involvement of law enforcement complicate the grieving process.
- SIDS is not preventable, but the risk can be reduced by placing the baby on his or her back to sleep on a firm surface, by making sure the baby has a smoke-free environment and by keeping the baby from being overheated.
- With the introduction of the Back to Sleep Campaign by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1992, the incidence of SIDS has decreased by almost 50 percent.

For more information visit the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (www.nichd.nih.gov) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org).

I believe in the Holy Spirit

by Isaac S. Villegas

Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind—Acts 2:2

Pentecost happened with a bang. Heaven came down to earth and blew through the room. This heavenly wind "filled the entire house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2). While all this is exciting stuff, the story dances on the edge of danger. "Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them" (v. 3). God's fire isn't something to be messed with. Remember what happened to Sodom. The people were inhospitable to strangers, to three foreigners, and God consumed the city with fire from heaven (Genesis 19).

Pentecost is the miracle of communication that leads to the miracle of communion.

That same fire comes again at Pentecost: God's fire, spectacular flames from heaven. Excitement fills the room and pours out into the streets. This isn't the first time the disciples get excited about divine fire. In Luke 9, Jesus and the disciples try to pass through a Samaritan village. But the villagers refuse. In response to their lack of hospitality, James and John ask Jesus if they should call down fire from heaven to consume the people (Luke 9:54)—just like Sodom and Gomorrah. The disciples want to use God's heavenly fire to punish the Samaritans. But Jesus rebukes them. God's fire is dangerous; Jesus won't let the disciples use it.

The miracle of communication that happened on Pentecost birthed a miracle of communion, of fellowship.

On Pentecost these flames come down from heaven, but this time God's fire doesn't destroy anything. The fire doesn't punish inhospitable people. Instead, the divine flames create the church—a group of people ablaze with God's spirit of hospitality. With the fire comes the Holy Spirit, who enables the disciples to speak in different languages. People visiting Jerusalem from all over the world hear the invitation of the gospel in their own language. Acts makes it a point to list all the peoples and languages so we get a sense for how expansive this invitation is—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Rome … everyone, Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:9-11). Everyone is invited to join this movement of God. And that's basically Peter's interpretation of the event when he quotes the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh"—notice how Joel says all flesh (v. 17). And skipping to the end of Peter's quotation of Joel: "Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"—again, notice how Joel says everyone (v. 21).

The Pentecostal Spirit of God leads the followers of Jesus into a mode of communication that opens them up to everyone, to different people in different languages. Pentecost is a communication miracle. And the point of the miracle is an invitation. The Holy Spirit doesn't descend with power in order to provide an exciting experience that comes and goes. Rather, the Spirit comes with fire and enables the followers to speak in different tongues so that everyone can hear the invitation of the gospel and join the fellowship of Christ. Pentecost is the miracle of communication that leads to the miracle of communion: people come together, foreigners become family, strangers become friends.

After Peter's impromptu Pentecostal sermon, the author of Acts describes what happens: "So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. … All who believed were together and had all things in common. … Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts" (2:41-46).

Speaking in tongues is only the beginning. Complete strangers start hanging out together. They devote themselves to fellowship, to being with one another. People open their homes for grassroots worship services—breaking bread, talking about Jesus and praying. And they share their stuff with anyone who needs it. The miracle of communication that happened on Pentecost birthed a miracle of communion, of fellowship.

Yes, this communion is a miracle because it's hard work to get together all the time; it has to be the Holy Spirit who makes it possible. People do a lot of traveling between here and there. Acts tells us that they eat every time they get together but fails to mention food preparation. Since these were daily communion meals, there must have been a lot of food to prepare.

Theologians like to come up with what they call "marks of the church." They narrow down the few practices that need to happen for church to happen. Different churches have different lists. If I were to pretend to be a theologian and come up with the two most important marks of the church according to Acts 2, they would have to be prayer and food preparation. The church needs people who are always learning how to pray and always coming up with new recipes for good food to share. This is an earthy spirituality: make food and eat it with people, then pray about what's going on in your life.

If, as I noted earlier, flames from heaven are usually dangerous, how can this be said of eating together and praying together? Well, this stuff is dangerous because you can't choose who you want to invite; you can't choose who you want to open your life to; you can't choose who you fellowship with. Think of the dangers and inconveniences that come with inviting strangers into your house. Didn't our parents teach us to be afraid of strangers? But if anyone heard the invitation, the host would invite them to her house and give them a seat at the table. That's dangerous. This isn't just friends getting together for a good time. The fire of the Spirit comes with dangers. But that's nothing new; after all, Jesus is killed when he follows the leading of the Spirit.

To believe in Pentecost is to believe that heaven has come, that Jesus is here, that the Spirit is on the move. And this kind of belief is not something you decide to do in your head. There's a lot of Christianity out there that insists that faith is all about a conviction you have in your head, a decision you make in your mind—that God exists or that Jesus saved us. It's all theoretical and rational—a faith for intellectuals. But Pentecost shows us that Christian belief and spirituality happen to your whole body. Your mind follows your feet. Decisions come after something happens to your life. A new consciousness comes when you have to figure out what to do with the mess of people all around you and the concrete responsibilities of mutual care: feeding people, praying for needs, sticking around when some folks start getting annoying, or sticking around when the excitement wears off and life gets boring, mundane, ordinary.

All that is what it means to have faith. The story of Pentecost, which is the story of the beginning of the church, begins and ends with people just hanging around, waiting for something to happen. First they gathered in the upper room, just because that's what Jesus told them to do before he left (1:4). Then the Spirit came upon them. The Holy Spirit didn't come because they first believed. No. Pentecost just happened, and it happened to their whole bodies, not just their heads. Their minds followed their feet out the door and into the streets. Finally, the miracle of communication created a regathered and renewed community. After all that came the decision of faith, the decision of belief.

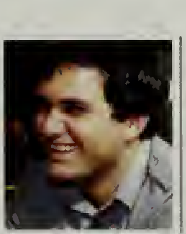
They faced the same decision we do today. Faith is simple but involves everything you have: to make food and eat together, to break bread and share a cup, to talk about Jesus, to pray for one another, to stick around even when you are annoyed and bored, to clean up after a mess of people invade your house, and then, after all that, to invite them to come back. That is faith: to decide to return, reassemble, come back, because that house of worship is where the Holy Spirit sustains our life, because this mess is what salvation feels like and what heaven looks like. Pentecost is a vision of eternal life.

Pentecost means that Jesus now comes when the Spirit brings people into fellowship, into communion. Salvation isn't simply about knowledge, as if we are a bunch of theoreticians and intellectuals. What you think in your head won't save you. Instead, we believe in a saving relationship. And to believe in this saving relationship is to let your mind follow your feet; you have to lean into this relationship, slowly and patiently live into it. It takes time, ordinary time, to grow into the saving life of Jesus made present in his body, in you and me, ordinary people doing ordinary things, like eating and praying.

Pentecost shows us that Christian belief and spirituality happen to your whole body. Your mind follows your feet.

If you are like me, you have a hard time seeing how all this ordinary stuff of church is infused with the spectacular Spirit of God. The usual doesn't feel very miraculous. The Spirit of Pentecost seems so distant. It's hard to believe that heaven is always at our fingertips. But that's OK. In fact, that's just the way it goes with faith. Paul says as much: "Now hope that is seen is not hope. … But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Romans 8:24-25).

We wait for it with patience. The miracle of Pentecost begins and ends with a bunch of people hanging around, waiting for something to happen.



Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Jassam Mohamed, an Iraqi medical assistant (left), hugs Weldon Nisly, whom he cared for when he was injured in a car accident in March 2003. Photo by Jamie Moffe

Neighbors in Iraq

Do we see an enemy or a neighbor in Iraq?

by Weldon Nisly

"Blessed are the eyes that see what I see," Jesus said to his disciples, adding that many people don't see clearly. Just then a lawyer questioned Jesus and Jesus turned the question to the love commandment and told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:23-37).

"I remember you. I carried you," he said, a revelation that was as straightforward as it was startling. For seven years I had remembered Rutba but did not remember being carried by someone after collapsing from injuries in Iraq. For seven years I had longed to return to Iraq, especially to Rutba, where some Iraqi people bandaged our wounds in a time of war. These Good Samaritans saw Cliff Kindy, from Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), Shane Claiborne, from the Simple Way, and me as injured people rather than hated enemies.

Seven years ago when the U.S.-led war on Iraq began, I was in Baghdad with other members of CPT, "getting in the way of war." We wanted to help the world see the war through Iraqi eyes—a different war from the "embedded" view seen on American television and newspapers.

On March 29, 2003, seven CPTers, including Cliff and me and a few others from the Iraq Peace Team, including Shane, left Baghdad in three cars. We were traveling across the Iraqi desert when our car blew a tire, careened into a ditch and turned over, injuring Cliff, Shane and me as well as a Korean peacemaker and our Iraqi driver.

Some Iraqi men in a car speeding the other direction saw us and stopped to help us while U.S. bombers flew overhead. These Good Samaritans quickly put us in their car and took us to a small clinic in Rutba, where an Iraqi doctor and his medical team treated us.

While caring for us, the doctor expressed distress that the hospital had been destroyed by U.S. bombs three nights earlier and asked, "Why would your country bomb our hospital?" He quickly added, "But don't worry, we help anyone here; Christians, Muslims, Jews, Iraqis or Americans. You are our brothers, and we will take care of you." He also apologized for their meager medical supplies and facilities. Cliff and I well remember having stitches put in our head with no anesthesia available.

When we were leaving, we tried to pay the doctor, but he refused to take money. Instead he asked us to tell the world about Rutba.

In the seven years since this life-changing event, we have remembered their generosity and told the story of Rutba. We have also longed to return and find the Good Samaritans who cared for us while our country invaded theirs.

Finally, in January, Shane, Cliff and I, along with Peggy Gish, another Iraq CPTer, made this journey. Joining us were Greg Barrett, who is writing a book about Rutba, Jamie Moffett, who is producing a film about Rutba, Sami Rasouli, an Iraqi leader of the Muslim Peace Team, and Logan Mehl-Laituri, an Iraq war veteran who is now a conscientious objector.

When we arrived in Rutba, we were escorted to the hospital where we were welcomed by Dr. Nazir and the mayor of Rutba. With typical Iraqi hospitality, we were served tea and juice. Both men insisted that we were their guests and graciously provided our lodging and meals during our entire visit.

A tour of the hospital let us see what they had rebuilt from the rubble of the earlier bombing. We heard the sad news that a little boy who was in the hospital and his father were both killed in that bombing. We saw a small operating room with an old operating table that had been dug out from under the rubble. We met a father and mother who brought their ill baby daughter to be treated at the hospital. We saw again that what they lacked in modern medical facilities and equipment they more than made up for with compassionate care, just as we had seen seven years ago.

We saw again that what they lacked in modern medical facilities and equipment they more than made up for with compassionate care, just as we had seen seven years ago.

The most eye-opening encounter for me happened one evening in the hospital guesthouse. We were visiting with hospital staff members when suddenly I saw the weathered face of a man standing in the doorway wearing a big smile. A puzzled feeling came over me at the sight of this strangely familiar face.

An unremembered yet familiar man walked in and said with delight, "I remember you," pointing to Cliff, "I remember you," pointing to Shane, and "I remember you," pointing to me. Then he added to me, "And I carried you." As Sami translated what he said, I grasped what it meant; he had been there and had carried me from the car into the clinic. Sa'ady Mesha'al Rasheed is the ambulance driver and was at the clinic when the Iraqi men brought us there seven years earlier.

I had told our Rutba story many times but had never mentioned Sa'ady carrying me from the car to the clinic because I had not remembered—

▶

Iraqis and Americans together: In the middle, from left, are Peggy Gish, Weldon Nisly, Cliff Kindy and Shane Claiborne.
Photo by Jamie Moffett

until I saw his face in the doorway and heard him speak. Then my body remembered. With tears in my eyes, I thanked him and listened as Sa'ady told us what he remembered. He had been suffering from asthma that day, he explained, adding simply, "But you were collapsing, so I carried you."

Sa'ady also shared other distressing memories of the war in Iraq. "We've been traumatized by the invasion," he said. One night he and his family were awakened by the explosion of a bomb blowing open his front door, a terrifying sound that had been heard many nights in Rutba. They felt the terror of heavily armed soldiers storming through the house in the middle of the night. With quiet sadness but without malice he said, "It was painful for me to see soldiers pull down a cabinet filled with nice china I had bought for my wife on my travels. They destroyed everything for no other reason than to humiliate us. I kept silent because I was afraid of being handcuffed and tortured if I said anything. I will never get over that night. Our children have witnessed these things and will never forget."

We did not see you as Americans. We saw you as injured people who needed help.—Jassam Mohamed

"Another time," Sa'ady continued, "I was driving the ambulance, taking a pregnant woman to the hospital in Ramadi, three hours away. She was in labor, bleeding and in pain. American soldiers stopped us, put me face down on the ground for three hours while they searched the ambulance. They could hear the woman moaning and pleading for help. After three hours someone brought a dog to check the ambulance before they would let us go on to the hospital."

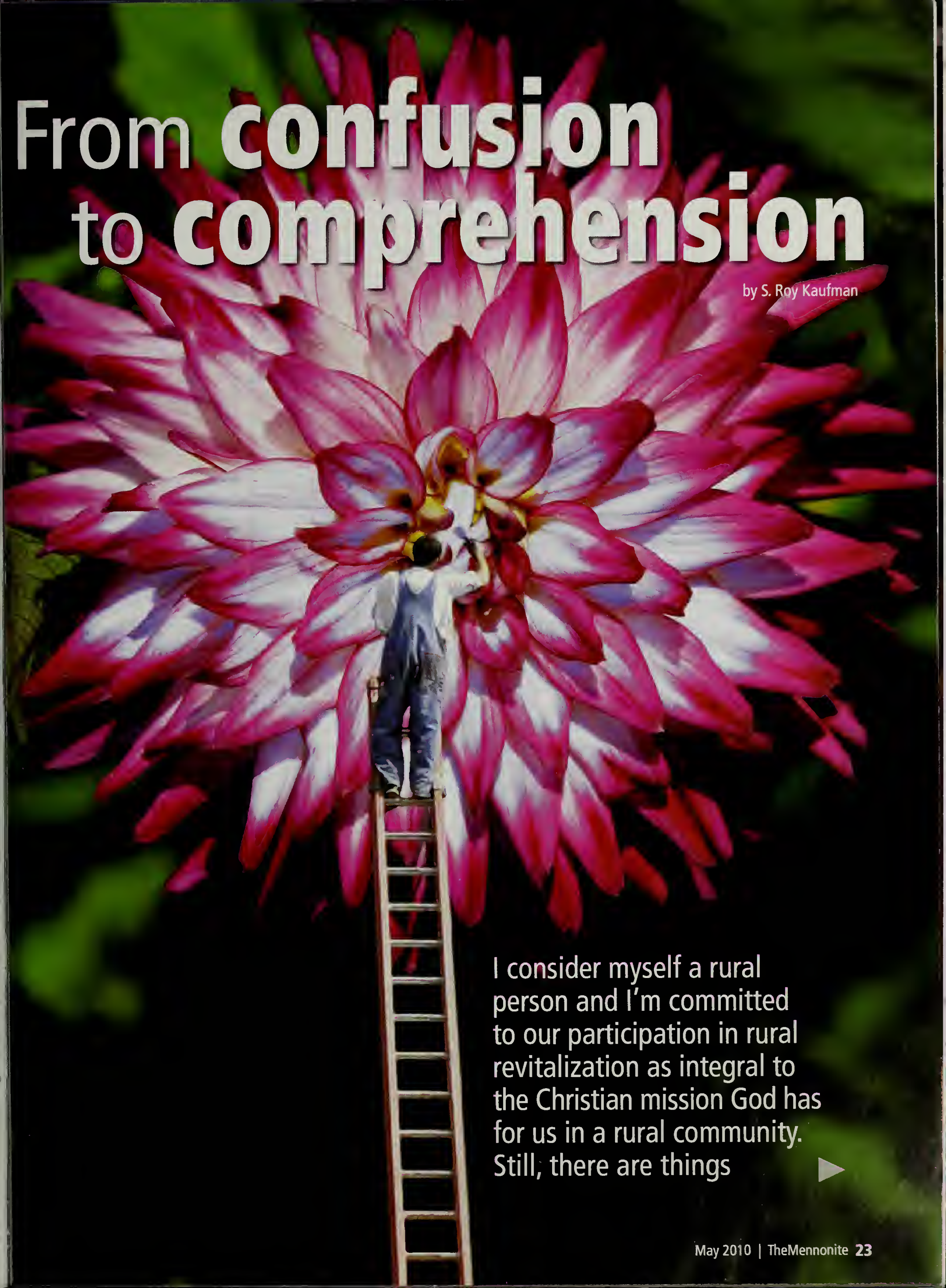
We heard many other stories about life in Rutba the past few years. One man told us that during the years that U.S. troops occupied Rutba he and his family went to bed with their clothes on. Nightly raids humiliated women who were pulled out of bed and traumatized everyone as they handcuffed men and took them away. One young man was pulled out of bed and handcuffed wearing only an undershirt. He was forced to lie on the floor of a helicopter. It was a cold night and they left the helicopter doors open as they flew, and he almost died of hypothermia. Another summed up our return to Rutba when he said, "Your being here is good because you will help Christians see that Muslims aren't terrorists and Muslims to see that Christians aren't infidels."

Our only disappointment was not meeting Dr. Farouq, the doctor who cared for us seven years earlier. He is now at the hospital in Ramadi near Baghdad, about three hours away, and could not get away to come back to Rutba while we were there.

Nevertheless our return to Rutba was also rewarded when we met Tariq Ali Marzoug, a nurse, and Jassam Mohamed, a medical assistant, who had cared for us seven years earlier. When Jassam came in, I eagerly reached out to shake his hand, but he reached out and gave me a big hug and said, "I welcome you with an Iraqi greeting." With amazed delight he told us, "When I heard you were here I thought you must have forgotten something. I could hardly believe that you came such a long distance to see us." We asked what they thought when Americans were brought to their clinic that day. Without hesitation they replied, "We did not see you as Americans. We saw you as injured people who needed help." They assured us that this is not an exception but is the Iraqi way.

Jesus ended the parable of the Good Samaritan by asking who was a neighbor to the injured? The lawyer confessed that it was the one who showed mercy. Jesus concluded, "Go and do likewise."

Weldon D. Nisly is pastor of Seattle Mennonite Church.



From confusion to comprehension

by S. Roy Kaufman

I consider myself a rural person and I'm committed to our participation in rural revitalization as integral to the Christian mission God has for us in a rural community. Still, there are things ▶

I appreciate about the city and urban life. I like the diversity of people found on city streets, in contrast to the ethnic uniformity that characterizes most rural communities.

Yet despite this obvious pluralism of the urban population, there is a superficiality in this diversity. Though the residents of the city have a rich ethnic and linguistic heritage, they are all required to speak the same language in order to make the city "work." So the apparent ethnic diversity is something of a sham. Though the city attracts people of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds, it requires them all to conform to the purpose for which the city exists.

The dominant cultures of our world represent the human desire to take God's place, to force an artificial uniformity on humankind, and to show how great we are as humans.

The often unspoken aim of the city as a spiritual power is clearly expressed in Genesis 11. The people in this story came together for two purposes: (1) to build a city with a tower that would breach heaven's gates and (2) to make a name for themselves so they would not be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.

The building of the city with its tower was made possible by the introduction of new construction technologies—the replacement of stone with baked bricks and the replacement of mortar with bitumen. This made the famous ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia possible, just as steel made the construction of the skyscraper possible in our day. In each case, the intention of these impressive building achievements is the same. It is for humans to make a great name for themselves, to breach the very gates of heaven, to make into one all the diverse peoples who come to the city and thus to make God irrelevant.

This human effort to make God irrelevant becomes obvious in the creation of the city as a sphere of spiritual power. The dominant cultures of our world represent the human desire to take God's place, to force an artificial uniformity on humankind, and to show how great we are as humans. And indeed, the achievements of the city are impressive. Who cannot be moved by the imposing architecture, the works of high culture in art and music, the technological developments, the works of commerce and industry, the political and educational and religious achievements of urban life. We humans are indeed given great capabilities by God, being made in God's image, and the city reveals as nothing else does how nearly divine we are as humans.

At the same time, I'm grateful that God keeps intervening, as God is portrayed doing in Genesis 11, to protect us from the consequences of our human pride. Just when we think we will achieve our greatest successes, God steps in to confuse our language and to scatter us abroad upon the face of the earth. Perhaps in our time God's hand can be seen in the economic crisis we are experiencing, as a global economic system premised on unlimited and unsustainable growth is disintegrating.

The problem is not with our desire as humans to create. That's something God-given. The problem is with the motivation that too often lies behind our creative drive. We want to make a great name for ourselves instead of honoring the name of God, our Creator. We want to impose an artificial uniformity on humanity instead of reveling in the rich diversity of humanity God has created. We want to create an artificial human environment, to build a skyscraper that will breach heaven's doors, thus denying our dependence upon God and God's creation.

It has often been observed that the coming of the Holy Spirit in power on Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead, represents a reversal of the story of the Tower of Babel we have been describing. The confusion of language that led to the scattering of the people and prevented them from completing their project of doing away with God is reversed as people from "every nation under heaven" are able to hear the gospel, "God's deeds of power," in their own native language (Acts 2:5-11). Confusion yields to comprehension as the people who hear the gospel come to understand what God has done for them as humans in the person of Jesus Christ. All this is made possible by the coming of the Holy Spirit of the risen Lord Jesus Christ on Pentecost.

Now the people are able to understand why their speech has been confused, why they have not been able to complete their human projects and why they have been scattered across the face of the earth. Now the people can comprehend that in order to fulfill their human projects, they must engage in this work not to make a name for themselves but to exalt the name of God and to participate with God in God's work of redeeming a broken world, the work God accomplished in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here are a few observations, based on the stories of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and the coming of the Holy Spirit in power on Pentecost in Acts 2:

First, God revels in human diversity. In the story of Pentecost, God doesn't expect everyone present to learn Greek in order to hear the gospel. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, everyone from every nation under heaven was able to hear the gospel in their own native tongue as the apostles spoke. God's project, as opposed to the human project described in the Tower of Babel, is not to create an artificial uniformity in which people are required to become the same and give up their unique ethnic heritage. God's project is to create a new humanity in which the uniqueness of humanity is respected and in which the people of each culture are free to worship God in the ways appropriate to their culture.

Second, God likes to see humanity scattered. This may sound strange, and I'm sure God has nothing against having people from around the world come together in one place to worship God, as people came to Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven" on the day of Pentecost. But in the story of the Tower of Babel God makes sure humanity is dispersed. God is all too aware of our human propensity to begin projects that try to dispense with God. God likes to see humanity scattered over the face of the earth, in many local communities that live peaceably with other local communities in sustainable ways.

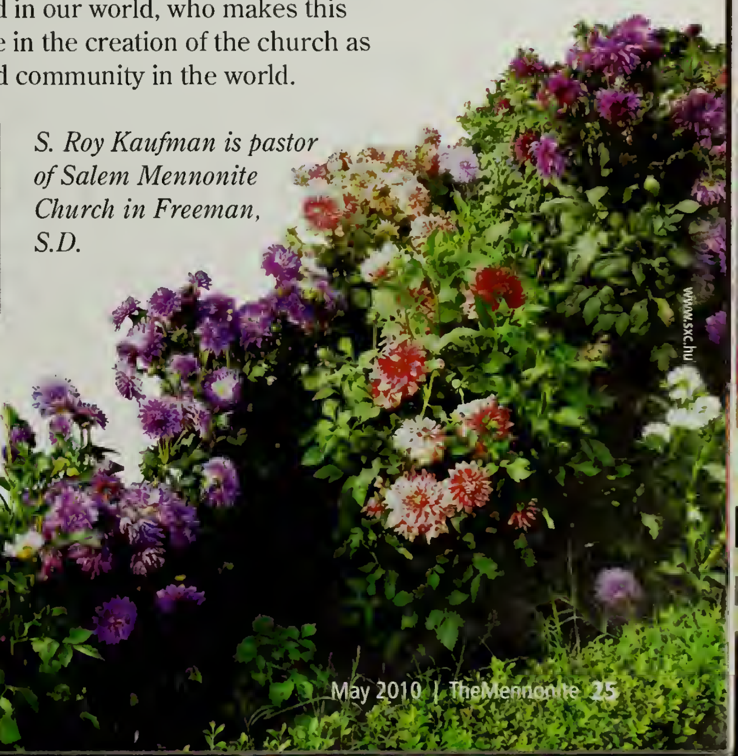
Third, God wants humanity united in Christ. This is a unity that respects and honors human diversity, a unity that breaks down the dividing walls that separate the human family without doing away with the unique heritage each person and each group brings to the whole. This is not a unity imposed forcibly on the human family in order to achieve some human aim, like that of building the pyramids or the Twin Towers. This is a unity whose purpose is to bring people together freely in praise and worship of God for what God has done for us in Christ.

God's intention in the creation of the church is that the church become the place in which people of every nation and race and ethnic heritage and language can come together in all their rich diversity, not to make a name for themselves but to exalt the name of God. This is what the visitors in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven comprehended as they heard the apostles speak about "God's deeds of power" in Jesus Christ, each in their own native language, on the day of Pentecost. Here the Holy Spirit had come to bring a redeemed humanity together in a new community we have come to call church—that unique creation of God that is first of all local and specific but at the same time universal and eternal.

God's project is to create a new humanity in which the uniqueness of humanity is respected and in which the people of each culture are free to worship God in the ways appropriate to their culture.

Our world continues to suffer from a profound confusion of tongues. We can't seem to understand each other. More than ever, the world needs to hear about God's deeds of power accomplished in Jesus' life, death and resurrection, each in their own native language. Confusion needs to yield to comprehension, as we hear, each in our own native language, what God has done for us in Christ, and then come together to exalt not ourselves but the name of God, who has done such deeds of power on our behalf. Praise God for the presence of the Spirit of the risen Christ in our midst and in our world, who makes this miracle possible in the creation of the church as God's redeemed community in the world.

S. Roy Kaufman is pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, S.D.



www.sxc.hu

Helping children live counterculturally

by Leonor Kennell

A **countercultural church** needs **parents** who set **clear limits** and **focus on responsibilities** and **relationships**.

In Jon J. Muth's adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's story "The Three Questions," a young man asks his animal friends three questions:

- When is the best time to do things?
- Who is the most important one?
- What is the right thing to do?

Not satisfied with the answers he receives from his friends, he visits Leo, a wise turtle, who is busy digging a garden. The young man offers to help the turtle, and soon a series of events occur in which the young man rescues a panda and her baby during a storm. The turtle then discloses to the young man that he has found the answers to the three questions by his very actions. Leo further clarifies his meaning this way:

- The most important time is now.
- The most important one is always the one you are with.
- And the most important thing to do is to do good for the one who is standing at your side.

That is why we are here.

These words illuminate the intent of Jesus' life and teachings; a set of beliefs that are truly countercultural. Yet, at least in the way we raise our children, we seem to be losing sight of this. Our acceptance of and assimilation into our culture easily preclude following the more radical message of the life and teachings of Christ.

What are the characteristics of our current culture?

1. We live in a society that values things and speed over people—over relationships: friends and family.

Nothing could be more evident when I choose to email my next-door neighbor rather than knock on her door and engage in face-to-face, genuine conversation.

A national convention youth sponsor told me that the youth with whom they traveled were actively involved in conversation during the trip, but once their plane landed, they immediately took out their cell phones and engaged them rather than each other.

2. We live in a society in which our sense of self is measured externally—by our successes, clothes, how many activities our kids are involved in and possessions in general.

As a former teacher in an infant and toddler program in New York City's affluent Upper West Side, I recall parents' concerns about adequate peer interaction opportunities for their young children. They placed them in our program as well as signed them up for music and dance lessons. These families were frenetically self-conscious about creating extraordinary children.

3. We live in a society where the focus is on individualism and competition as opposed to a more prosocial paradigm where the group is also important.

Growing up in a Mennonite mission church in New York City in the 1960s, I remember the large number of voluntary service workers who came to work among our disenfranchised communities. These youth found their experiences meaningful, and many chose to remain in these communities and continue their contributions long after their required service terminated. Today, without the draft, there are no Mennonite voluntary service units in New York City, and I wonder if this culture of service has been replaced with a focus on "getting ahead" and "making it."

4. We live in a society of two working parents and a high-rate of divorce, one in which parents are less physically and emotionally accessible to their children.

Children whose families have regular family dinner times are less likely to engage in deviant behaviors, yet this routine has become the exception rather than the norm.

We are aware of how difficult it is for parents who work all day to attend adequately to the needs of their children. Exhaustion takes its toll, and quality family time bears the brunt. Recent studies demonstrate that children whose families have regular family dinner times are less likely to engage in deviant behaviors, yet this routine has become the exception rather than the norm.

Many of our children grow up doing few or no chores, perhaps because they don't have the time due to other involvements or perhaps because parents feel guilty about the little time they have for them. When children do have chores, they are often monetarily compensated. These children grow up with little or no meaningful role to play at home. As they mature, they will likely also have an ill-formed sense of relationship to or responsibility for the larger social order.

What has been the result?

- We have higher numbers of socially and psychologically at-risk children. While this has always been true of children who live in poverty, this has now become a significant issue among affluent preteens and teens, whose rates of depression, anxiety and substance abuse show alarming growth.

- Peers are raising peers. Our children have greater peer influence at a younger age when they typically were more influenced by their parents. The ability to develop a core sense of self is impaired. And primary peer influence in general promotes a greater acceptance of deviant behaviors such as substance abuse, violence and delinquency.
- Children who spend long hours in poor quality child-care centers typically exhibit higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol. This can damage neurons in developing brains, resulting in later learning and social difficulties.
- Guilty parents may give their children things rather than their time. Yet we hear teens saying they wish they'd had more time with their parents when growing up—more than having received the latest electronic gadget and more than belonging to teams or clubs.
- Children have become less useful at home, and need much done for them. They have not been allowed sufficient time within the context of nurturing caregivers to resolve the very tasks of early childhood.

Teens say they wish they'd had more time with their parents when growing up—more than having received the latest electronic gadget and more than belonging to teams or clubs.

What are the tasks of early childhood?

- The ability to delay gratification and tolerate frustration—how can these skills develop when emotional needs are continuously being met by things or peer groups? It is in the context of a bond with nurturing caregivers that children begin to develop these fundamental skills.
- The inability to delay gratification and tolerate frustration is resulting in a society of adults who are less giving and more egocentric, believing their needs must be met externally.
- We are aware of the influences of television and video games. Besides a tendency to learn violence and be exposed to other inappropriate content, we have a society of children whose neurological development has been rewired as a result of watching screen images steadily before age 2. These children have more difficulty paying attention and being motivated by experiences and consequences.

How do we counter this?

We can help our children develop a sense of self that will serve them as an internal guide to becoming positive and contributing members of society who follow the life and teachings of Christ.

1. We need to give the gift of time—the gift of time that will enable us truly to nurture and bond with our children. This strong bond, a basic attachment, enables our children to face the world and its challenges—to cope, love and care about others.

When both parents need to work outside the home, what can we do about our child-care environments to give children what they need? As a church, should we take a more active role in early childhood? Should we, instead of just planting churches, also plant quality day-care centers with well-trained and well-paid staff?

2. We need to reclaim the role of play in the classroom and at home. What do kids learn through play? They learn all the essential skills they need to develop emotional intelligence:

- self-control
- respect
- kindness
- tolerance
- fairness.

We are all aware that with the No Child Left Behind Act, many early childhood centers feel compelled to drill children in skills that are mostly inappropriate for their developmental levels. As a result, there isn't the same level of child-directed play that enables children to develop self-confidence and problem-solving capabilities.

While we tend to think of play as an early childhood phenomenon, we need to reclaim it for our older children as well. My daughter, a high school senior, has attended an Expeditionary Learning school since junior high. In this model, students are involved in a variety of outdoor experiences for days at a time that build community and leadership skills. They learn to problem-solve together and share a common language and set of values that carry over into their relationships and learning experiences. These are the fruits of positive play.

When my daughter celebrated her 16th birthday at our home, she and 15 classmates of mixed gender played Ultimate Frisbee and walked a slack line with the abandon of young children. There was almost none of the typical discomfort between boys and girls. Relating rather than flirting was the order of the day.

3. We know that young children learn by mod-

eling and direct-teaching, so it is important to tell them to share, wait their turn, play nicely. As they grow older, they will internalize these values. Sometimes we have seen our older children stray away or rebel at a certain point in time. This does not mean we should not continue to stand for what we know is good and right and true—what is of love, what is of God.

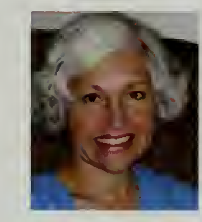
We must allow children to fail without constantly rescuing them, at the same time that we set firm limits and allow them to deal with the consequences of their behaviors. Somehow we think that giving firm limits and consequences is equivalent to not loving children, especially when we are not emotionally or physically accessible to our children. Our feelings of guilt create problems for our children, preventing them from developing good coping skills.

4. Finally, a strong bond with our children helps them ultimately develop a strong faith in God. Experiences of trust, security and affirmation balanced with clear expectation set the stage for healthy belief in a Creator and sustainer.

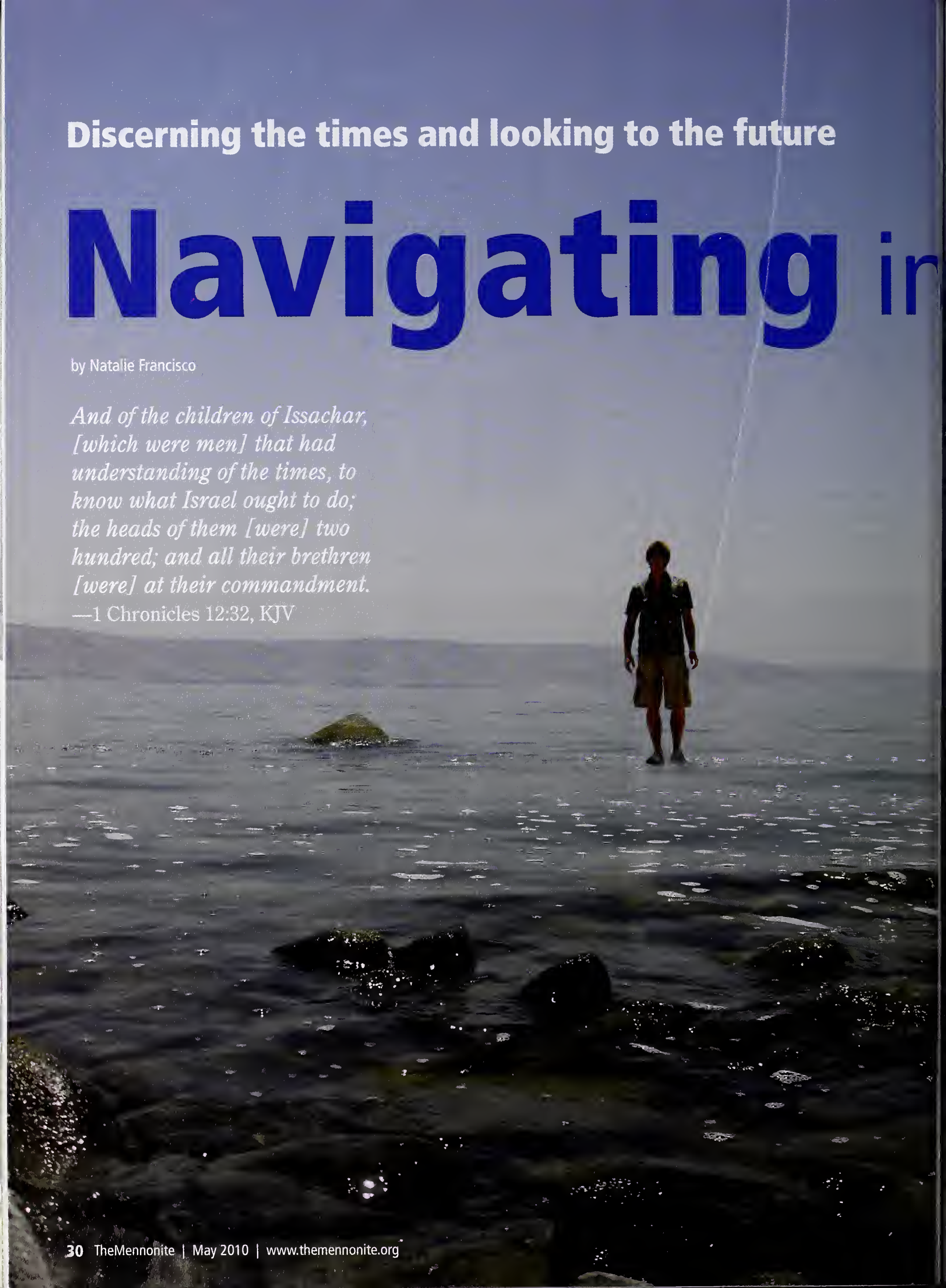
A countercultural church needs parents who set clear limits and focus on responsibilities and relationships.

I challenge us to make big changes in how we raise our children.

> We must allow children to fail without constantly rescuing them, at the same time that we set firm limits and allow them to deal with the consequences of their behaviors.



Leonor Kennell attends Fort Collins (Colo.) Mennonite Fellowship but lives in Estes Park, Colo., and is a bilingual early childhood special educator. This is a shortened version of a presentation at the Mennonite Early Childhood Network session at the Mennonite Church USA convention in San José, Calif., in 2007.



Discerning the times and looking to the future

Navigating i

by Natalie Francisco

And of the children of Issachar, [which were men] that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them [were] two hundred; and all their brethren [were] at their commandment.
—1 Chronicles 12:32, KJV

a sea of change

This Old Testament passage is a favorite of mine because it challenges us to place ourselves in the context of Scripture and relate it to our contemporary, cultural settings. The men of the tribe of Issachar, as we see in this passage, were few in number; however, they served David the king both effectively and efficiently because of their skill and discernment of knowing exactly what to do, how to do it and when.

According to the Matthew Henry commentary, these men not only understood the natural times but could "discern the face of the sky, were weatherwise and could advise their neighbors in the proper times for plowing, sowing and reaping."

During ceremonial times and solemn feasts, the sons of Issachar would also "call the people to the mountain" (Deuteronomy 33:19). They understood politics, public and national affairs as well as current events of the day. Their specialty, as evident in 1 Chronicles 12:32, was discernment of the times and seasons in which they lived for the sake of supporting the king and promoting the common good of the people of Israel.

Like the sons of Issachar, we must promote the agenda of our God and king as well as the common good of God's people so that God's kingdom is established on earth through the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and become naïve concerning the signs of the times. It is our mandate to discern the current state of affairs in our community, nation and world and respond accordingly with righteousness, justice and love.

Today we will participate in group discussions in an effort to discern the times and deliberate as we look toward the future with anticipated solutions for hope and healing. To prepare for such a task, I invite you to stand with me as we recite together the profound words penned in Matthew 6:9-13, known as "The Lord's Prayer." It is this prayer that sets the precedent for our daily conduct and commission to navigate through the murky waters of our world.

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen."

It is our mandate to discern the current state of affairs in our community, nation and world and respond accordingly with righteousness, justice and love.

Natalie Francisco is co-pastor of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., and founder of Women of Worth and Worship Institute.

Message from above

by Jake Hallman

I thought the lady was crazy. Here we were, on a family trip to the Bahamas, sitting lazily by the pool, soaking up the sun while family and friends back home in Pennsylvania dealt with temperatures in the 40s.

Tara, my wife, and I were sitting poolside with our two young boys, Zeke and Brett, dangling our feet in the water and taking stock of all of the people at the resort.

Our first few days on Paradise Island followed a routine as we saw the same group of people at the pool. Tara, who looks much more approachable than I do, befriended two women in their 20s from the Midwest. Between dips in the pool to harass the kids, I eavesdropped as they talked about family, college and, eventually, religion.

With the commonality of Christianity, the bond grew deeper. Our family said hi to the women as we passed in the hall of our hotel or on the way to the pool.

And we were poolside again on our new friends' final day of vacation. Their bags were by their sides as one of the women scanned the pool. She locked eyes with Tara, showed a sign of relief on her face and hurried over.

It smacked of an annoying mass email chain letter, a tract handed out at the airport or something straight from a late-night evangelist.

www.sxc.hu

"This is going to sound really weird," she said, obviously nervous. "And I'm not the kind of person who does this kind of thing or says this kind of thing. But God has put it on my heart to tell you that something wonderful is going to happen to your family."

Tara, looking puzzled, thanked her before they said their goodbyes. Eavesdropping again on the conversation, I was cynical at first. It smacked of an annoying mass email chain letter, a tract handed out at the airport or something straight from a late-night evangelist.

"What do you think it means?" Tara said.

"I'm not sure," I said. "We're not rich but happy, and we have supportive families. I think the only thing it could be about is having another child. What do you think?"

"The only miracle I would want is another child," she said.

The roadblocks: As for most parents, the births of our children were among the happiest moments of our lives. And as for most parents, those births were not without a dose of adversity. Our oldest son, Zeke, now 11, was born while Tara and I were 19 and 20, respectively. We wouldn't have traded anything for our blessing, but it wasn't without its share of financial hardship as I worked full-time and went to college full-time while Tara stayed at home to raise our son.

Four years later, as we got a little more established financially, we became pregnant with our second son, Brett, after two miscarriages. Early in the pregnancy with Brett, a routine ultrasound discovered a defect in his spine. That started a journey that ended up in Philadelphia at the University of the Hospital of Pennsylvania as Tara underwent fetal surgery in 2003 as doctors from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia repaired Brett's back in utero to prevent any further damage from his spina bifida.

Tara was on strict bed rest in Philadelphia until she delivered Brett three months later as I played the role of Mr. Mom back at home in Pennsburg, nearly an hour away. Brett, one of just 50 children in the world at the time to un-

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Preparing students for life, vocation and service to the church

The month of May reminds us of our mission to prepare students for the purposes of God's universal kingdom as we witness members of the graduating class receive their diplomas and embark on hundreds of unique trajectories.

On May 9, this year's graduates will hear from commencement speaker Elaine Moyer, Bluffton alumna, Mennonite educator and currently associate director of Mennonite Education Agency. Her address, "Engage Complexity, Live Simply," describes the ways in which Bluffton has prepared its graduates to live in an increasingly complex and nterconnected world and challenges them to make a positive difference with a simple lesson of compassion.

Cross-cultural experience. As one way that we prepare students for a world of complexity, Bluffton is sending another arge group of students during this year's May term to off-campus destinations for cross-cultural learning experiences that 90 percent of our students complete under the guidance of Bluffton faculty. This year's groups are traveling to Guatemala; England and Wales; Colombia; Israel/Palestine; the Hopi, Navajo and Zuni reservations of Arizona; and to Chicago and New York.

Bluffton is working in other ways to make sure our students are well-prepared for life and vocation and for service to the church. In response to our longstanding commitment to meet societal needs, Bluffton continues to move forward with academic program development in several fields related to health care.

Health care. A new health care management concentration is being developed within Bluffton's Master of Business Administration (MBA) program that will add several elective health care management courses to the current program. Bluffton's MBA program, now in its seventh year of operation and currently enrolling 85 students, seeks to develop managers who will strengthen workplaces that can serve the common good and impact the well-being of our society and our world.

In another health-related area, a task force is meeting to design an undergraduate public health program for Bluffton students. This interdisciplinary program will help meet the demand for public health workers that is expected to grow over the next decade, in this country and in other global settings.

Dietetics. Faculty in Bluffton's food and nutrition program are in the process of developing a post-baccalaureate dietetic internship program. This yearlong experience will prepare and qualify students to take the national registration examination leading to professional employment as a registered dietitian.

Social Work. Bluffton is developing an evening undergraduate degree-completion program in social work to complement its traditional day program. This effort builds on our effort to serve the growing numbers of older students who are resuming their formal education in mid-career. Bluffton's social work program, accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, has a strong regional reputation with hundreds of social work alumni working in public and private-sector settings.

Thank you. In these, and in many other ways, Bluffton alumni, faculty and staff support and provide Mennonite education that nurtures students, and that builds and serves the church. Thank you for your support of Mennonite higher education.

JmHarder

James M. Harder
President

Learning through Ubuntu, a simple green community

"Ubuntu, A Simple Green Community." This is the theme housing challenge that 12 students chose to take Bluffton's enduring value of community to the next level this year.

Ubuntu group gathers for a Sunday meal.

Ubuntu is a Zulu word meaning, "I am because we are." According to Jackie Wells, director of residence life, "the Ubuntu community goals revolve around living in simple community. The students focus on using their resources, not wasting food, sharing community responsibilities, and living and learning as Jesus did. In essence, theme housing allows students to take what they learn in the classroom and implement it firsthand in their living spaces. Many of the students share that this is a great opportunity for them to try things out before they face the real world."

Bluffton has offered themed housing since the mid-1970s. "Theme housing is a great extension of our residence life model because it gives students the opportunity to take ownership of their living environment, inviting them to implement the value of community that they've been learning about in their liberal arts education." said Wells. This year's theme housing is located in Riley Court, with women living on one floor and men on the other.

Senior Devon Matthews from Bluffton, Ohio, is a part of the group living in the intentional community. "Our goal is to try to figure out what we can do to live simply, starting with little changes we can make in our daily lives to reduce the consumption of energy."

The residents work at reducing energy use by unplugging electronics when they are not being used, turning off lights when a person leaves the room, air-drying laundry, using re-usable grocery bags and buying local groceries, just to name a few ways. "One of the goals for me is to be able to get to the point where I am willing to deal with the inconveniences for the welfare of my community," Matthews said.

The group believes that meal time is an important time to share together so they set aside Sundays as a special community day. The residents split up responsibilities for the day. Some are involved in cooking and preparing the meal; others are involved in cleaning up after the meal. If people cannot make it to the meal, or just need a week off, they are given the responsibility to update the group's blog online. The meals also serve as an important way for the group to learn. The Ubuntu group is mentored throughout the year by a group of seven faculty and staff members on campus. The group invites one or two of their mentors to come and share the Sunday meal with them. Several of the mentors have been involved in intentional communities before, so they are able to share valuable information and give advice on issues that the group may encounter.

For Andrea Flack, a senior from Canton, Ohio, living in the Ubuntu community allows her to establish meaningful relationships with those she lives with and others who share an interest in the Ubuntu theme.

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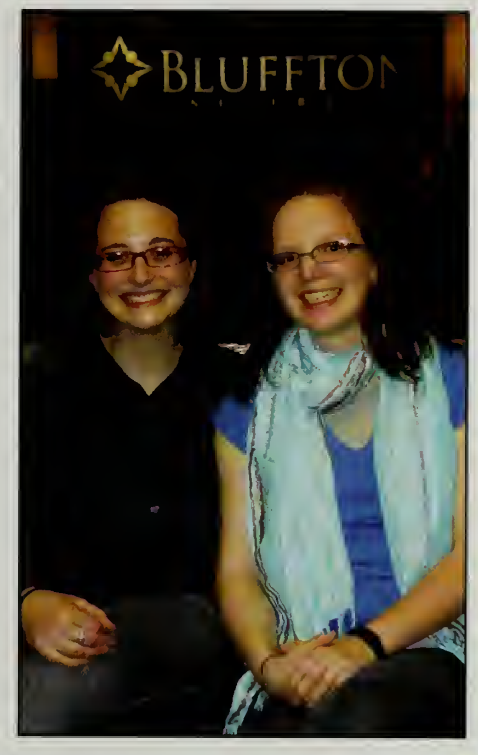
Anna Pawsey '10 and Abigail Stern '10 - PULSE Experiences



This spring, PULSE (Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience), founded by John Stahl-Wert, celebrates 15 years serving and engaging young adults in a city- based community. PULSE is a program that places college graduates within the city of Pittsburgh at non-profit, community-building organizations such as hospitals, radio stations and food banks. Participants learn about the power of serving and engaging in the local city-based community.

More than 10 Bluffton University alumni have served in the program since 1994 and this fall, two more Bluffton alumnae will carry on the tradition. Anna Pawsey '10, a social work major with a peace and conflicts minor from Clyde, Ohio, and Abigail Stern '10, a social work major with a business minor from Chambersburg, Pa., will join in the 11-month PULSE program in August.

Stern said, "Bluffton lets you give back and be selfless, and that was something I wanted to pursue in my own life. They taught me to live intentionally, with passion and purpose."

Pawsey, coming from a non-Mennonite background, said, "I knew that I wanted to do voluntary service, and I heard about PULSE during one of the service days sponsored by Bluffton. Bluffton has taught me about the importance of learning through others, and this program provides that opportunity to serve and engage in the community."

For more information about PULSE, visit www.pulsepittsburgh.org

"I have learned a lot from our many iscussions about what living in an intentional ommunity means, and the living experience s helping me to explore the person that I ant to become."

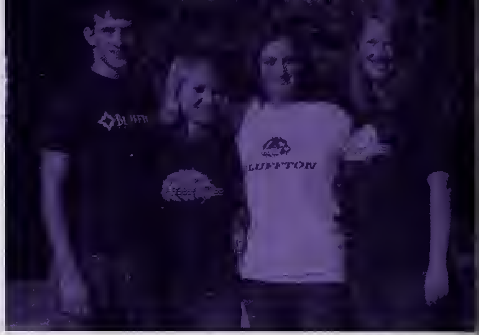
lack feels that Riley Court has been an deal place to test out new ideas. Through er interactions with the other people in iley Court, Flack has been able to explore er creative side, as she has expanded her nterest in "trash art" as a way to personally mbrace the group's focus on environmental tewardship. "When my housemates in iley Court found out about my skills, they ncouraged me to experiment with making ther arts and crafts with items which would ormally be thrown away."

hrough the experience of living in the buntu community, Matthews feels that he has learned ways of living simply that he will take with him after graduation. His fiancée Kristen Shelly, a senior from Penfield, N.Y., is also involved in the project and through the shared experience, they have considered continuing the lessons of intentional community when they are married. "We really like the idea of living interdependently. This experience has taught me that as long as you keep an open mind and are willing to be a part of someone else's dreams, you will soon become passionate about what others are passionate about, even if it is something as simple as recycling," said Matthews.

For more information on Ubuntu, check out the blog at http://rileycourtubuntu.blogspot.com/

By Evan Miller, '10

Andrea Flack '10, Canton, Ohio



Philadelphia Mennonite High School visits Bluffton

Welcome to Bluffton! March 22-25, juniors from Philadelphia Mennonite High School joined the Bluffton University campus community and visited sites in northwest Ohio as part of the school's annual inter-session trip.

Traditionally, Philadelphia Mennonite High School freshmen visit sites within Philadelphia, the sophomores visit a location within Pennsylvania and seniors travel to Puerto Rico. This year, school administrators accepted an invitation to bring members of the junior class to Bluffton University.

"The Philadelphia Mennonite High School students felt very welcomed here on campus, at First Mennonite Church in Bluffton and at the businesses in northwest Ohio that they visited," said Andy Lehman, Bluffton University admissions counselor who coordinated the visit. "This was a great opportunity to build new relationships and provided the visiting students with a cross-cultural learning opportunity."

During their time on campus, students attended classes and the annual Smucker Lecture Series Forum, experienced campus life in residence halls, participated in religious life activities and met with staff from the multicultural affairs office and the admissions office.

The students also traveled to Archbold, Ohio, to learn about the Sauder Historical Village. In the afternoon, they returned to Bluffton for a group service project at Mennonite Memorial Home, where they helped with landscape cleanup and interacted with the residents during their "Welcome Spring!" party.

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Bluffton's mission...to prepare all students for life, vocation, responsible citizenship and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom.

Bluffton faculty, staff and students aspire to carry out this mission through discovery, community, respect and service – including service to the church.

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dergo the surgery, progressed better than we could have imagined as he crawled, walked and was able to keep pace with the rest of his peers.

Blessed with two young boys, we decided to try again. But this time around, things weren't as easy. A visit to the doctor revealed Tara's hormone levels were extremely low. The doctor prescribed a regimen of hormones and told us it would be nearly impossible for Tara to get pregnant again.

We were devastated. We had a gut feeling our family wasn't complete and explored adoption. Friends from church had adopted from China, and we started to pursue that route. A month into the laborious process, we were set back again, as China's adoption program requires both parents be 30 or older. And since we were both in our mid-20s and not interested in adopting from anywhere else, we were again back at square one.

The good news: Despite the medical evidence against us, Tara got the feeling, that only women apparently can get, that she was pregnant. We didn't get our hopes up at first, but a pregnancy test (actually two of them) confirmed that we were going to be parents again—and it all happened just a month after our vacation to the Bahamas. Our experience from the miscarriages taught us not to get too excited. We kept the news to ourselves for the first few months, then spread the word.

Because of Brett's spina bifida, Tara's pregnancy was considered high risk. The high-risk part translated into a lot more worry, prayers and ultrasounds but all looked well leading up to the big day. And on Sept. 18, 2007, Tice James Hallman was born at Grand View Hospital in Sellersville.

Our third son's birth, in our minds, was nothing short of a miracle. Despite the odds of getting pregnant with low hormone levels, and without the use of fertility drugs or experimental treatments, God somehow found a way to make it happen.

Months after Tice's birth, amid trying to adjust to a home of three boys four years apart, we dwelt on what we felt was the premonition of our son's birth from a complete stranger.

After the trip, we never spoke to or saw the woman who stepped out of her comfort zone to say what God laid on her heart. How many times have we, as Christians, heard, felt or been nudged to action and have not gone through with it? At the moment, we always say we'll do it next time or think about it some more and then decide. Not wanting to look, sound or feel awkward we close our collective ears and hearts rather than listen and be led by the Spirit.

How many times have we, as Christians, heard, felt or been nudged to action and have not gone through with it?

The Bible, though, gives Christians the confidence to live life to its fullest. Acts 5:29 reminds us, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." From the Old Testament in Isaiah 43:1-3a: "But now, thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

Or Proverbs 28:1: "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion."

It is with this spirit that we should live our lives—as bold as lions. The woman in the Bahamas could have taken the easy way out, said nothing, thought about her message from above on the plane ride home and then wondered a few years later what great things happened to that couple at the pool and their children. And we easily could have brushed her off, not taken the message to heart and not attributed our miracle to the true source.

But she shared the message, spreading God's word and goodness in the process. To be on the receiving end of this is a great thing. My hope now is that I will be bold enough to repay the favor.

Jake Hallman is a member of West Swamp Mennonite Church in Quakertown, Pa.

Year-round stewardship for congregations

Larry Miller is president and CEO of Mennonite Mutual Aid.

As followers of Christ, we take seriously the call to live as faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. Our faith should inform our decisions and practices in use of money but also our use of time, talents and how we care for our health and our relationships with God and others.

The message of stewardship needs to be given attention year round in our congregations—not just as a year-end reminder to give to the lagging budget. This year, MMA is encouraging key practices from a research study, "Year-Round Congregational Stewardship: Six Best Practices," by the United Church of Canada. The following six best practices can help congregations achieve a holistic approach to stewardship:

1. Operational management: The operational management of our congregational giving plan needs to go beyond meeting our budgets. We need to communicate that our giving plans support internal ministries as well as the mission beyond the congregation.

Sound fund-raising methods can help make our congregational giving plan more than just meeting the budget. Clearly communicating our congregational vision and story helps connect the dollar amounts with our congregational ministries.

Asking members to estimate or make a commitment of their annual giving makes congregational giving a priority for the year. There are many opportunities for giving beyond the Sunday morning offering, such as electronic funds transfer, online giving, planned-giving arrangements, fund-raising events and special offerings. Whenever we communicate with our members about the giving plan, be sure to express appreciation and thanks to those who make it a priority.

2. Stewardship and worship: Stewardship and worship are about offering our whole selves to God. Regular teaching on stewardship can be included in the worship service through sermons, prayers and litanies, stewardship quotes, bulletin covers, Scripture texts and children's lessons. There are a variety of ways the offering can be celebrated as an act of worship.

3. Stewardship formation: Forming identities as Christian stewards will help counter the consumer culture that surrounds us. This is reinforced when we emphasize that we "offer" worship to God rather than "being fed." Stewardship education as an aspect of spiritual formation needs to focus on all ages within the congregation.

4. Stewardship leadership: Unless someone is assigned the responsibility for the stewardship mission of the congregation it will probably not get done. In many congregations, a stewardship or finance committee is responsible for tending the budget, but little attention goes into the stewardship focus of the church beyond this.

> Stewardship education as an aspect of spiritual formation needs to focus on all ages within the congregation.

5. Spiritual nurture opportunities: Understanding one's identity as a steward goes hand in hand with spiritual maturity. People who take their role as a disciple of Jesus seriously tend to reflect that in their expression of generosity, including management of their time, talent and money.

6. Engagement in social justice and peace: How we use our resources reflects the level of concern we carry for those beyond ourselves. It has been suggested that a church giving plan/budget is the best window into the soul of a congregation.

How we divide and distribute our money as congregations suggests whether we are concerned only for ourselves or for those who live across the street and around the world as well. The giving that congregations commit to assists others and has a direct justice and peace component. Congregations should be challenged to consider giving to missions and faith-based relief work around the world as part of our responsibility in extending healing and hope to the world.

I encourage congregational leaders to evaluate where your congregation is doing well and identify areas for improvement in stewardship ministry. MMA's professional staff can help through a wide range of presentations and resources. TM

Entering God's time, full-bodied

I like rituals. Not a very Mennonite thing to say, perhaps, given how much the Anabaptist movement in its early years decried the exaggerated ritualism of its day. But it was the ritual of baptism, stunningly reclaimed, that opened vistas for the Spirit to transform ordinary people into fearless witnesses.

In recent weeks, we have traversed once again through the stories of Holy Week and then move with Jesus onto Ascension Day and Pentecost. Many of us reenacted Jesus' last supper with his disciples, sharing bread and cup, washing each other's feet or hands.

Our family and church community have often celebrated Passover—with adaptations of the Jewish Seder, hoping to more fully understand Jesus' liberating word: "This cup is the new covenant." I love the children's questions inviting parents to retell their story of liberation: Why is this night different from all other nights? Why do we eat only unleavened bread tonight? Why do we mix the bitter herbs with the sweet haroset? Together parents and children of all ages "lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord."

Ritual, when done well, is the Word of God writ large in 3-D. It's a minidrama where mere humans enter into God's salvation story, for real. It's not simply going through the motions, limited in time and space by a stuck materialism that pontificates, It's only a memorial, a sign. Ritual can help create a "thin place" where we are transported into God's time; when time as we know it sits still at the feet of Jesus.

Our family had an abbreviated Passover meal this year, mostly because Mom was in too big of a hurry with other things. As Wordsworth said so eloquently: "The world is too much with us; late and soon. Getting and spending we lay waste our powers." But there were moments that transported us into God's time. Gerald read the Passover story from *The Five Books of Moses*, a new translation by Everett Fox. Then we prayed, clasping hands as is our custom—and Gerald gave thanks for the ways God continues to liberate. I broke the beautifully braided, warm challah bread our daughter baked for the occasion (not generally used for Passover when unleavened bread is featured, but we're not purists). We shared ceremonial cups and feasted on roast lamb.

When the children lived at home, we celebrated a Sabbath meal, thanking the "master of the universe" for the gifts of bread and grape juice and for the gift of a day of rest—a magnificent gift for an enslaved people—whether in Egypt or in frenetic North America.

For a family calendar my sister is making, I reviewed Wenger Shenk family dates. I noted the birthdays of each of our three children and their baptism dates. Scenes flitted in full color through my mind: mentor Jerry Holsopple's original songs with one son on the piano and another singing tenor, words of blessing from grandparents, embraces by pastor Basil Marin, "wade in the water" with full immersion for one, the joy beaming from faces, and the clear word from each: "I have decided to follow Jesus."

In a recent colloquium at Eastern Mennonite University, sociologist Nathan Wright from Bryn Mawr College provided an analysis of how Mormons have managed to persist in their core identity while adapting to changing circumstances over the generations. He spoke of "dynamic endurance" and demonstrated how ritual has played a decisive role in holding this community together despite significant conflict as they adapt to the mainstream yet manage to persist in their core sense of identity.

In my experience, Mennonites (not unlike others) are conflicted about the function of ritual. We're aware that ritualism can be abused and so give ritual minimal attention. We tend to underestimate ritual's power to unify or divide (e.g., recent furor over the role of the national anthem). We become captive to the notion that there is a right formula to do a ritual and are hyper vigilant—anxiously sticking with the rote performance of words on page rather than entering full-bodied into God's time, where the Spirit (so full of surprises) actually shows up.

When Jesus knew he was about to be torn away from his friends, he said: "This is my body," "This is my blood." He gave his disciples a tangible way to hold onto him. What more could we ask for—in worship—than the ritual opportunity over and over again to hold on to Jesus for real?

As families and faith communities, we've unnecessarily starved ourselves. The full-bodied gifts of God are for the people of God. Thanks be to God. TM

Sara Wenger Shenk is interim dean and associate professor of Christian practices at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and president-elect at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Ritual can help create a 'thin place' where we are transported into God's time; when time as we know it sits still at the feet of Jesus.

What do Mennonites believe about … ?

John C. Murray is pastor of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

I was asked this question in hallway conversations at the Religion and Foreign Policy Workshop I attended July 14-15, 2009, at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City.

The Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, nonpartisan organization that seeks to create a deeper understanding of the world and the foreign policy choices facing world leaders. Its goal is to bring together people of diverse backgrounds, perspectives and opinions to discuss and debate matters of international importance.

The Council on Foreign Relations does not take positions on issues. It does not seek to make statements or pass resolutions. It does not expect that as a result of these debates everyone will come to agreement. It encourages people with differences to "make their case." The workshop I attended included a wide variety of Christian leaders along with leaders in the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist communities.

> What if instead of establishing doctrines and codes of conduct the church told stories, reflected on parables and shared in table fellowship, even with those who are different from us?

The Council on Foreign Relations believes that conversation and debate, building relationships and deepening understanding will have a positive impact on the world and the choices made by world leaders, even without agreement.

I attended this workshop 10 days after departing from Columbus, Ohio, and the Mennonite Church USA convention with all its debates and resolutions and striving for an agreed-upon identity. As I pondered these two experiences I had to wonder:

What if the goals of Mennonite Church USA conventions were more akin to those of the Council on Foreign Relations? What if Mennonite Church USA chose not to take denominational positions on issues but brought together people with various backgrounds, perspectives and opinions for conversation and debate? What if the goal of those conversations was not agreement on the wording of resolutions but building relationships and deepening understanding among those who disagree? What if we believed that those conversations would have an impact on the church and the world and strengthen congregations for ministry even if there was little agreement on various issues?

What if we fully lived our denominational vision regarding "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love"? What if we saw the identity of the church as based not on particular positions on particular issues but on a commitment to engage one another and those around us with honesty and vulnerability in a spirit of love? What if instead of establishing doctrines and codes of conduct the church told stories, reflected on parables and shared in table fellowship, even with those who are different from us?

What if we as individuals and as a church could acknowledge the pain we cause by our frequent use of the weapons of coercion that we wield so skillfully within the structures and processes of a historic peace church? What if we acknowledged the destructive power of our fear of those who are different from us? What if we acknowledged the incomplete truth revealed through our rush to easy answers? What if we recognized that spiritual discernment doesn't always function best within the constraints of Robert's Rules of Order?

Taking a new road will not be easy. Beyond acknowledging that there is a problem, changing paths will require personal acknowledgement of our own responsibility for the road we are on. It will require a recognition that continuing on our current journey will lead to death rather than life. It will require a recognition that we cannot move forward in isolated camps of agreement but need the relationships of a broad community. It will require that we open ourselves to relationships of accountability without making others responsible for our choices or functioning as if we are responsible for the choices of others.

Ultimately, maybe it's not about "what Mennonites believe." Maybe it is about what each of us believes about how we as Mennonites relate in community with those who have different perspectives. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MMA's new name: Everence

Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union will also use the name.

On March 25, MMA president Larry Miller unveils the organization's new name and logo. The target date for the changeover is Nov. 1.

Mennonite Mutual Aid, which prefers to be called MMA, will have a new name: Everence. The name will also be used by the Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union. The target date for the name change is Nov. 1. MMA and MFFCU leaders announced the name change and introduced the new logo in a press conference on March 25.

"Everence is a reminder of words like reverence, forever, permanence and everlasting," MMA's president Larry Miller said." It is a reminder of our foundation of faith and our connection to the church, which is extremely important to us and is not changing. The new logo is primarily inspired by a vine. A vine is a prominent image in the New Testament that often signifies the interconnected nature of community. It speaks to how we are an organization that is building a community of members dedicated to the traditional Anabaptist understanding of stewardship … the vine is shaped [in] the image of a cross."

MMA told the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board on Feb. 18 that it planned to unveil a new corporate identity and name "that brings together all parts of MMA into a unified brand." Among the reasons: MMA members are confused by the variety of names currently being used; Mennonites no longer seek out other Mennonites to do business with as they did two generations ago; as an organization that works with multiple denominations, the word "Mennonite" is both a positive and a negative; in Internet search engines, the acronym "MMA" has been taken over by Mixed Martial Arts.

According to Miller, The name Everence Financial will be used as the overall name for the organization, and Everence will be applied to many of the organizations facets.

- Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union will become Everence Federal Credit Union.
- MMA's retail insurance and securities offices will be known as Everence Financial Advisors.
- MMA Trust Company will become Everence Trust Company.
- Mennonite Foundation will become Mennonite Foundation, A Division of Everence Financial.

Mennonite Retirement Trust and The Corinthian Plan are programs of Mennonite Church USA, and their names will not be changed, Miller said. They will be administered by Everence.

"Changing an identity at a key juncture is not a new idea," Miller said. "In fact, changing one's identity to signal a new direction is biblical. Abram became Abraham and Sarai became Sarah. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. And Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter. … A change of identity reflected that a new day was coming."

W. Kent Hartzler, president of Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union, also provided a statement at the March 25 press conference.

"I see several advantages in making this move," Hartzler said. "It helps us fulfill our vision of providing a comprehensive set of financial services for members in partnership with MMA. Operating under a single name, especially in our joint office locations, brings all our services together in members' minds. It is a name that does not give the impression that we are exclusively for Mennonites. … Preliminary reactions suggest the new name is also more appealing to younger members, which is important as we reach out to younger people."

In a letter sent to credit union members, Hartzler also noted that the current name has so many words it is difficult to get them all on a sign large enough for passersby to see.

Steve Bowers, MMA's director of marketing, said the cost for the name change would be "in the six figures." Costs include new signs, changes to Web sites and changing the language in many documents. Miller said the name change will not require a change in Mennonite Church USA Bylaws.—*Everett J. Thomas*

One youth group generated six pastors

Four from the Yoder, Kan., MYF are now in Indiana-Michigan conference.

Everett J. Thomas

Four Indiana-Michigan Conference pastors had their roots in one MYF in Kansas (left to right): Kay Bontrager-Singer, Bj Leichty, Ron Diener, Terry Diener. Bontrager-Singer and Leichty are sisters. The Dieners are brothers. Bj holds a photo of some Yoder (Kan.) Mennonite Church pews purchased by the Dieners.

The Jan. 10 ordination of associate pastor Bj Leichty at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind., provided an opportunity to share about her part in the Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) group at Yoder (Kan.) Mennonite Church in the 1970s.

It was also an opportunity to celebrate that four pastors raised in that small Kansas community are now leading Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference congregations.

The other pastors (pictured above left to right) are Bj's sister Kay Bontrager-Singer, co-pastor of Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.; Bj; Ron Diener, lead pastor of Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen; Ron's brother Terry Diener, lead pastor of Clinton Frame Mennonite, Goshen.

Bj, Terry and Ron were among six youth in the small Yoder MYF over a three-year period who have since been called to pastoral leadership. The others are Nick King, who pastored in Wichita, Kan.; Ervin Stutzman of Harrisonburg, Va., now executive director of Mennonite Church USA; and LaVern "Clyde" Yutzy of Lewistown, Pa., who has worked with Youth for Christ throughout his career.

The following excerpt is from the sermon Terry Diener preached at Bj's ordination:

"The MYF saw in Bj leadership abilities and a deep spirituality," Diener said, "which we affirmed by electing her as vice president and then president. Bj was one who could think outside the box and pushed us to try new things.

"The support and encouragement of Yoder Mennonite Church is part of the reason so many of us are serving as pastors today. One example: A local Mennonite college professor came to speak at a Sunday evening service. This professor brought a rather controversial message and pretty direct challenges.

"Some older adults in the congregation were very upset about what they had heard and verbally expressed their anger about what the professor had said. The youth were very upset at these older people who had responded so emotionally to the speaker, and the older people felt like the speaker had been disrespectful of their understanding of the Christian life. It was an important moment for both youth and adults—with some tension and potential for more conflict to emerge.

"After the service, Bj's mother Ilva (Bontrager) arranged for some of the youth leaders to meet with the adults in their home—to talk about what had happened and to find reconciliation. In that meeting, forgiveness and grace were offered by youth and adults alike as they shared their thoughts and their hurts.

"Through this time of sharing from the heart, confession and prayer, the youth leaders grew in their understanding of what it means to be a part of a caring community and grew in their spiritual lives. They came to realize in a much deeper way that they were part of a community that loved and cared for each other, even in times of disagreement.

"I see this story as an example of your home and church community and the kind of experiences that nurtured your development as a young person and that make you the person you are today."—*Annette Brill Bergstresser, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference*

Conversation at coffee shop

In a March 17 interview, four pastors with roots in the Yoder (Kan.) congregation shared memories of their MYF years. What follows is a composite sketch of that experience provided by all four:

They said: "Two couples were our sponsors all through youth group: Perry and Silvia Stutzman and Charles and Gladys Meadows. They were so much a part of us, but they didn't play the role of kids. There was something about the way they liked us, and we liked them. It was a gift from God."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Dispersed staff helps all of MC USA

Staff connect to fringes rather than centralized locations.

Glen Guyton, Mennonite Church USA's denominational minister for Intercultural Relations, works from his local community in Hampton, Va. He says there are two things he needs to do his job: a good Internet connection and a good way to connect with people.

Glen Guyton

The Internet allows Guyton to communicate with denominational office staff in Elkhart, Ind., Newton, Kan., and Harrisonburg, Va. He can work from home or carry his office with him via a cell phone and laptop. And good connection to people keeps him in tune with how God is working throughout the wider church—especially within his home congregation of Calvary Community Church, where his office is located.

"If we want to be a church in which every congregation and every person is at the center of what God is doing somewhere, then we need to value having staff work where they live," Guyton says.

Guyton is one of many staff members who are "dispersed"—serving away from one of the denominational offices. Denominational leaders are embracing new technologies and attitudes that help them respond in new ways to constituents' desire to be connected to the whole, says Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA's executive director. Stutzman, in the short term, has chosen to serve the wider church from his home in Harrisonburg rather than move to Elkhart or Newton. Newton was the working site of retired executive director Jim Schrag. Stutzman may discern it best to move in the future.

"I want to be part of maintaining a network of people all over the church rather than perceiving the church as being in one or two centralized locations," he says. "Many constituents feel on the fringes in one way or another. So we need to ask: Where is the center of the church? And how can we help connect the fringes to the center?"

Stutzman and the Executive Leadership staff with the church's four agencies—Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency (MEA), Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Mutual Aid—are discerning what "center" means for a church undergoing change.

"We are adjusting to the constant flux that is the 21st century, and I think it's somewhat like living in the first or second centuries of the church's existence," says Ken Gingerich, art director for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership Communications. He works from home in Albuquerque, N.M.

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of Convention Planning for Executive Leadership, works from home in Phoenix, Ariz., and is a member of Trinity Mennonite Church in nearby Glendale. "Trinity has softened my heart for the churches on the fringes, whether they are in isolated rural areas, racial ethnic communities or urban centers," she says. "Congregations need connections to denominational leadership that go deeper than an annual visit or a presentation at their conference gathering."

Elaine Moyer, an associate director of MEA, works out of her home in Harleysville, Pa. She says she believes serving the church includes harnessing technology in ways that enhance Anabaptist community.

"At MEA we are exploring possibilities for expanding our online education capacities," she says. "But we must be careful to contextualize this from an Anabaptist perspective that values communities and community discernment."

Staff members also grapple with challenges, including lack of daily office interactions, says Bethany Shue Nussbaum, development associate for Mission Network, who works from an office at Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio. "Because I'm an extrovert, working dispersed has taken some adjustment," she says. "I miss the water cooler chats and pick-up-and-go-lunches, and long phone meetings can require extra patience and focus."

Rhoda Keener, executive director of Mennonite Women USA, works from her home in Shippensburg, Pa. "I can get more work done in solitude at home, but I miss the relationships in an office," Keener says. "I have to recognize my social needs and make sure those get met in other ways. There are also limits to long-distance communication. Some work really needs to be done in person."

I want to be part of maintaining a network of people all over the church rather than perceiving the church as being in one or two centralized locations.—Ervin Stutzman

John Powell, a church relations associate and antiracism coordinator for Mission Network, works from home in Ypsilanti, Mich. "Research shows us the old church is moving away from its old 'centers' and into the periphery of other communities," he says. "We need to be careful not to label anything as central—other than Christ's call to be relational people. No matter what else we do, we need to help each other remain faithful to Christ's call in all the places where we are."—*Laurie Oswald Robinson*

Central Plains hosts hermeneutics seminar

Described as 'conversation where we actually agreed and disagreed in love.'

From left: Mick Murray, Julie Murray and John Blosser Yoder at the Central Plains Mennonite Conference seminar.

About 120 people attended a Central Plains Mennonite Conference seminar for congregational leaders, "Come, Let Us Reason Together: Developing Common Understandings for Discernment," held Jan. 8-9 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Last summer at Central Plains annual meeting in Freeman, S.D., the conference council shared with the delegates a plan to appoint a unity task group to study the conference's policy on variance. Then at Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009 in Columbus, Ohio, the delegates approved a resolution calling for the development of resources for discernment around divisive issues.

Central Plains ministry staff considered these events and thought a good starting point for discernment would be Scripture and how we interpret it. Several pastors in the conference had also expressed a longing for more theological reflection around issues of variance.

Conference minister Tim Detweiler worked with pastors David Boshart, Kent McDougal and Mathew Swora to plan a seminar for congregational leaders on the subject of hermeneutics, or how we interpret the Bible.

"The purpose of this seminar was to help us reflect on our common understandings for discernment as we address issues of variance in our conference," says Detweiler.

"In my memory," says Boshart, "this is the first conference that was called for the purpose of Scripture discernment. We began by looking to the Bible as our common foundation for faith and life under the rule of Christ."

On Jan. 8, Detweiler and moderator Diane Zaerr Brenneman opened the meeting and introduced the communication "ground rules."

Kent McDougal, pastor of Christ Community Church in Des Moines, presented "The Rule of Christ in His Church," a paper that examines how obedience to the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew equip us for ethical discernment.

On Jan. 9, Mathew Swora presented "Biblical Roots, Interpretive Connections," in which he traced the scriptural roots of *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and how the church has arrived at its current position regarding human sexuality. Swora is pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Minneapolis.

Cynthia Lapp, pastor of the Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, presented "Living Side by Side with Difference," in which she proposed allowing a diversity of views and following the Gamaliel principal from Acts 5, "If it is of human origin it will fail, but if it is of God ..."

Each of the papers and the conference's policy on variance are available at www.centralplainsmc.org.

"Too often when we talk about issues of faith and life, participants begin by speaking to the issue primarily from their own experience," says Boshart. "That's a conversation, but it isn't hermeneutical discernment. This meeting began with the establishment of a common foundation from which our experience could be tested and corrected through the lens of scriptural interpretation."

Participants spent the last session in table groups of about eight people responding to these questions: What have you heard that represents the best of who we are as a faith community? What have you heard that raises concerns/fears for the future of our common life as a conference? What have you heard that will move us toward our highest hopes as God's kingdom people?

In their written reports, many tables expressed appreciation for the respectful tone of the gathering, noting especially the humility of all three presenters. There was wide affirmation for starting with the Scriptures and "what unites us." Some expressed feeling more confident that the church can do the work of discernment. "This is the church doing its job," one person commented.

Concerns expressed most often by the table groups had to do with fears of division and of losing our witness because we get bogged down in controversies.

"I was impressed with the level of discourse," says Lapp. "It was evident that we all take the Bible seriously and we all love the church. I was grateful to be part of a conversation where we actually agreed and disagreed in love."

"I confess I entered this weekend with a bit of fear and trembling and lots of prayer," says Detweiler. "But I left praising God for the way in which I saw God's Spirit bring us together."—*Shana Peachey Boshart*

MCC leaders respond to MC USA's concerns

Leader names the challenge in creating boards large enough to represent all.

The chairs of two Mennonite Central Committee boards responded to a news article published by *The Mennonite* in April ("MC USA Moderator Questions MCC"). MCC U.S. board chair Ann Graber Hershberger and MCC (binational) board chair Herman Bontrager released a statement on March 19 in response to the article, which first appeared in the March 15 *TMail.*

"As your readers try to understand the concerns raised by Mennonite Church USA Moderator Ed Diller," they wrote, "perhaps a bit of background will be helpful. … Mennonite Central Committee is working on revisioning and restructuring—the New Wine/New Wineskins process of the past 18 months. The process included more than 2,000 people from Canada, the United States and around the world. All 14 denominations that have representatives on the MCC Canada, MCC U.S. and MCC (binational) boards, plus the 12 MCC boards, are being asked to give multiple rounds of feedback and will approve the final proposals. Mennonite Church USA is fully engaged in this, and moderator Diller's letter was part of the first round. Decisions on bylaw changes are part of the process and will be finalized no earlier than 2011."

The statement referred to a Dec. 28, 2009, letter sent by the Mennonite Church USA moderator. In the letter, Diller expressed his concern that MCC will become a nongovernment identity, as has happened to Heifer International, and insisted that it "remain close to the church and not go the way of other nonprofit organizations." As to its accountability to sponsoring denominations, Diller said, "Global Anabaptists should participate in a [new] governance board, but non-Anabaptists should not."

MCC's leaders did not respond to the concern about the organization becoming an NGO (nongovernmental organization), but they did note the difficulty of including so many groups in the reorganizational process.

Ann Graber Hershberger

Herman Bontrager

Bontrager and Hershberger said, "One challenge is to create board tables large enough to accommodate representatives of all the groups that need to be there: Canadian and U.S. Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches, local MCC offices and Anabaptist partners around the world who work with MCC in relief, development and peacebuilding in the name of Christ, the mission entrusted to MCC by the churches."

Diller responded to the statement by email on March 23. "At this point the discussions with MCC are still focused on concepts," Diller wrote. "While we believe that it is appropriate for us to express our strong desire for each of Mennonite Church USA and MCC to continue the close alignment with the other, it seems inappropriate for Mennonite Church USA to choose the time when MCC should release 'thought pieces' for broad public discussions of direction and detail. Mennonite Church USA and its members have been profoundly shaped and influenced by their connection and work with MCC in the past, and we look forward to a future where together Mennonite Church USA, MCC and other denominations and persons involved in the work and ministry of MCC will continue to bring God's healing and hope to the world."

The boards of the 12 MCCs (provincial, regional, national and binational), which include representatives from 21 Brethren in Christ and Mennonite denominations, adopted this new identity statement in 2009: "Mennonite Central Committee is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches."—*Everett J. Thomas*

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Reframing the immigration debate

Speaker asks, 'What if we did the parable of the Good Mexican?'

From left, M. Daniel Carroll Rodas, Paul Neufeld Weaver and Baldemar Velasquez at Bluffton's Beyond Borders conference.

The national conversation on immigration is stopped in its tracks by all the shouting and inflammatory rhetoric about the issue, M. Daniel Carroll Rodas told a Bluffton (Ohio) University audience March 19. But if people, particularly those of faith, start the conversation in a different place, the tone is different, too, he said.

Rodas, distinguished professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, was the keynote speaker for Bluffton's three-day immigration conference, "Beyond Borders: The Role of Immigration in a Global Community." He recommended that Christians begin the immigration discussion "at the beginning," with the creation story in Genesis, because it says God created humans in his image and to rule the earth.

That gives every human infinite worth and potential, Rodas said, and so the question shouldn't be how to keep immigrants out but rather, if they were created in God's image, what they can contribute to the common good.

It's not that he advocates open borders, he said, saying borders must be organized. If the issue is approached from a different point of view, however, organization of borders may be done differently, he said, arguing for "a bigger perspective" on what is a world issue.

Changing the conversation extends to asking if laws are good or bad, what values they reflect, how they treat the lowly and weak, and how Christians should react to them, said Rodas, who grew up in a bilingual, bicultural home in Houston and spent his summers in his mother's native Guatemala, where he later taught for 15 years.

"We organize our lives according to our laws, and many of them are arbitrary," he said, citing as an example the laws governing driving on either the right or left side of the road, depending on the country.

Among other provisions, Old Testament law allowed for rest on the Sabbath for the "sojourner in your midst," as well as timely payment of a fair wage, Rodas said, pointing out that God's law was already taking into account the human tendency to exploit outsiders.

In the United States now, he said, "we have forgotten all the stories" of how difficult it was for our ancestors as immigrants to America. "The only part we remember is the food," he said, saying that while most immigration memories have dimmed with time, those that remain tend to be about traditional food.

"The Bible's full of people on the move," he said, and while all Christians are still sojourners, they have forgotten they're "strangers in a strange land."

Even Jesus began his life as a refugee, Rodas said, and eventually applied the command to love your neighbor as yourself to an outsider in the parable of the Good Samaritan. "That must have been a big hit," he said. "What if we did the parable of the Good Mexican?"

"Jesus turns everything on its head," he said. "Even if you don't like immigrants, even if they're your enemy, you feed them" and if they're thirsty, give them water to drink.

The current, contentious debate about immigration "isn't anything new," he said, showing an 1890s cartoon in which Uncle Sam stands at a Washington gate and holds his nose at an immigrant marked with the labels "Sabbath desecration," "poverty" and "disease."

Fear of people who are different from you is a natural human reaction, he said, but culture isn't static, assimilation happens—albeit at different rates—and today's Hispanic immigrants will learn English as part of their assimilation. "We ought to see bilingual people as a gift, not a threat," he said, saying tendencies to either demonize or idealize the immigrant "are both wrong."

"It'll just take time, but that's why the church has a role to play," he said.

More than 140 people attended the conference, which was sponsored by Bluffton and organized by Paul Neufeld Weaver, assistant professor of education at the university and its 2009-10 Civic Engagement Scholar. Also part of the event were more than 25 workshops and panel presentations, plus a session led by Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and a 1969 Bluffton graduate.—*Scott Borgelt of Bluffton University*

Professors offer contrasting views on anthem

Goshen College faculty present opinions; 1,200 sign petition against anthem.

Two Goshen (Ind.) College faculty members presented conflicting opinions on playing the national anthem before sports events at the college.

A March 24 campus convocation featured fast-paced presentations by Kathy Meyer Reimer, professor of education and chair of the department, and Joe Liechty, professor of peace, justice and conflict studies and chair of the department.

The 33-minute convocation, titled "Perspectives on the Anthem," took place on March 24—the morning after the national anthem was played before college sports events for the first time ever. The anthem was played March 23 before a baseball doubleheader against Siena Heights University and a softball doubleheader against St. Joseph's College. In an introduction to the convocation, President Jim Brenneman said it is important to discuss complex issues with academic vigor and a spirit of love. And the college, he said, is committed to continued conversation on the anthem issue.

Meyer Reimer said Goshen's decision to play the anthem had removed "one of the symbols and sacred rituals borne out of Anabaptist convictions about nationalism. The anthem controversy also speaks to how we make decisions both large and small when there are conflicts between what we feel is asked of us by our faith and by the good country in which we live."

She said those who approved playing the anthem in order to extend hospitality to non-Mennonite student-athletes and coaches may have made the college less hospitable. "If we want people who are not familiar with Anabaptism to understand some of the assumptions basic to practices that happen at Goshen College," she said, "we need to be clear and willing to talk about the core Anabaptist beliefs that become rituals."

Meyer Reimer said Mennonite and Anabaptist beliefs about militarism, nationalism and patriotism often are misunderstood as a lack of appreciation for the country.

"Anabaptist Mennonites have not expressed gratitude for those things they appreciate about living in the United States as often as they could or potentially should," she said, "but it is not that they haven't, on the whole, worked for the good of their communities or been of great service in times of national disasters."

Liechty began his presentation by stating that he grew up uneasy about patriotism. "I was in second grade when I decided that I shouldn't say the Pledge of Allegiance, and I didn't," he said. "As a high school student during the Vietnam War, I experimented with not standing for the national anthem, but then I decided that standing was the cost of playing basketball and football at Goshen High School, and so I stood, praying that God would understand that I was at least grumpy in my heart. Today, I don't sing the national anthem or put my hand over my heart, which is a gesture that gets way too close to devotion for my comfort, although I do always stand for the anthem out of respect for those for whom the anthem is important."

Despite misgivings, Liechty said he supported playing the anthem before campus sports events to promote the welfare of the college community. Liechty said he balanced one faith commitment—to refuse militarism and the excesses of nationalism—and another faith commitment—that a Christian college must promote hospitality and inclusion. "One commitment cannot simply trump the other; both need to be taken seriously."

Liechty drew a distinction between the hospitality at a Mennonite church and a Mennonite college. Forty-five percent of Goshen students come from other religious traditions. Liechty said Goshen College should accommodate reasonable requests, such as playing the anthem.

"When I think about what the anthem means, I conclude that it does not have a fixed, inherent meaning." He said that since the college has decided that the anthem will be followed by the reading of the Prayer of St. Francis, "it would be hard for anyone to go away with the idea that Goshen College supports militarism and nationalism." —*Richard R. Aguirre of Goshen College*

Editor's note: On April 5, a group delivered to President Jim Brenneman an online petition signed by more than 1,200 people against the anthem decision. Brenneman said he would share the petition with the board of directors. The board will also review the decision in June 2011.

Jodi H. Beyeler

From left: Professor Joe Liechty, professor Kathy Meyer Reimer and President Jim Brenneman talk at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Twilight for campus legal codes?

Talking circles aid the aftermath of destructively drunk students and more.

After more than a decade of ushering misbehaving students at James Madison University (JMU), Harrisonburg, Va., through hearings, sanctions and other legalistic steps, Josh Bacon wanted a change.

"I went into educational leadership and student affairs because I cared about young adults and their futures," he says. "But that's not how they perceived me—they saw me as the 'bad guy,' somebody there to enforce the university's rules, somebody who wasn't on their side."

Seeking a fresh approach, Bacon signed up for a restorative justice course at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, taught by an internationally recognized pioneer in the restorative justice field, Howard Zehr.

Even before the semester-long course was over, Bacon was applying restorative justice principles and techniques to cases referred to JMU's Office of Judicial Affairs, which he directs. In the last 18 months, Bacon has offered students the option of participating voluntarily in "restorative justice circles" about 20 times. All concerned—the errant student, the people harmed by the student's actions, community members affected by the incident, such as campus police or residence hall members—have found it to be an overwhelmingly positive experience, says Bacon.

Bacon's fresh but effective approach to discipline caught the attention of colleagues at JMU. As a result, 20 JMU officials joined 50 administrators from 11 other universities at a March 15 symposium offered by the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at EMU. About half this group returned to EMU for the next three full days to undergo intensive training. The leaders of these trainings offered multiple examples from their universities of handling destructively drunken students, vandalism, plagiarism, theft, assault, interpersonal conflict and noise issues through circles and other restorative justice processes. Bacon's preferred process—a restorative justice circle—is not complicated, though it does require a trained facilitator, preferably with a gift for handling sensitive interactions.

To illustrate the circle process, let us start with a composite situation that would be readily recognizable to university officials: a 20-year-old sophomore living in a residence hall gets drunk at an off-campus party. He then joy-drives around the university's baseball field, leaving deep tire marks. He tops off his evening by vomiting in the lobby of his dormitory. Called by campus police, the city police come and arrest the sophomore for vandalism and underage drinking.

This "offender" is the son of a lawyer, who proceeds to look for holes in the evidence against his son, fearing his son's suspension or expulsion, not to mention police record. The father advises his son to admit nothing about the incident. Members of the baseball team begin sending the son angry emails and posting blog attacks because they can't practice on their home field or host home games while new sod is being put down on the damaged parts of their field. The son begins to be afraid of being attacked by baseball players, when he can't even recall driving across their field.

In the past, Bacon would have felt trapped in the legal issues of the case. Was a breath test given and what were the results? Is this the sophomore's first offense? What is the cost of repairing the baseball field? But answering these questions would make nobody feel any better or motivated to change.

Today, this is what Bacon would do in such a case. He would contact each person affected by the incident—from the student himself to the person who cleaned up the vomit. He would offer each person the opportunity to participate in a restorative justice process whereby everyone would sit together and consider what harms were done by this incident and what could be done to "put things right." Everything would be confidential and could not be used in judicial proceedings.

Each person would speak in turn, using the "talking piece," initially telling his or her story. As each person speaks in successive rounds of the circle, the speakers usually move from how they were affected by the offense to exploring ways that the harm can be healed or mitigated. In such a setting, the sophomore no longer has any reason to minimize his role. He can explain that he was undergoing an initiation into a club and was urged to keep drinking even after he felt he had enough. His designated driver abandoned him, so he tried to get home on his own. And he loves baseball—he comes to all the games. He never meant to do anything to hurt the team.

Then Bacon would lead the circle to consider next steps. These may include a loan from Dad to pay for resodding the baseball field that the son will repay by working on the university's grounds crew for the summer, volunteering to staff the baseball concession stand during home games so more funds could be retained by the team, and helping the residence-hall cleaners on weekends when they are shorthanded.

Of the 20 circles he has facilitated so far, Bacon says none have failed to yield positive outcomes. At the rate things are going, Bacon dreams of changing the name of his workplace from the "Office of Judicial Affairs" to the "Make Things Right Office."—*Bonnie Price Lofton of Eastern Mennonite University*

Johnstown church forgives ex-pastor

Stahl Mennonite Church chose not to press charges against pastor who stole.

Tom Croyle, former pastor of Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa., faces charges of stealing money from two charities in Johnstown.

According to a Feb. 24 report in the *Tribune-Democrat*, Croyle is charged with misappropriating $64,484 from Bridge of Hope of the Laurel Highlands and stealing $18,615 from St. Francis Sharing and Caring Inc. in Conemaugh Township.

He paid back about half the money before he was caught, according to police.

Croyle also took an unknown amount of money from Stahl Mennonite Church. Croyle was the pastor at Stahl Mennonite of Allegheny Mennonite Conference for seven years.

Croyle confessed to the congregation in June 2008. After this, action needed to be taken by Allegheny Conference's Leadership Commission, according to interim Allegheny conference minister Donna Mast. His license was suspended at that point, and following this, Croyle voluntarily asked that his credentials be terminated. His credentials were withdrawn in early 2009.

Joy Cotchen, conference minister of children and youth for Allegheny Conference and a member at Stahl, provides this statement from Stahl: "It was a difficult time for our congregation after Tom's resignation, but we chose to work at healing and forgiveness with the help of our interim pastor Rose Bender."

To address this issue, Allegheny Conference formed two teams, says Kurt Horst, former conference minister. One team helped Stahl decide what to do and aid in healing. The second team worked with Croyle.

Stahl Mennonite did not press charges. "Stahl named and grieved the abuse and loss and chose to move on," says Horst.

"Things will go wrong," Horst says. "When they go wrong, turn to your conference leaders for help. They have resources."

He also says the Mennonite Church USA document on pastoral misconduct offered guidance.

Rose Bender finished as Stahl's interim pastor early this year. Stahl Mennonite Church is in a pastoral search at the moment.—*Anna Groff*

Marketing Manager

MMA has an opening for a marketing manager to lead efforts to develop and administer strategic marketing plans for regional offices, market credit union services, and integrate all marketing activities with the MMA brand. This is a full-time position, in Lancaster, Pa., shared between MMA and Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union (MFFCU). Qualified candidates will have a bachelor's degree in marketing, business administration, or related field, as well as professional marketing experience.

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Lydia Center
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There is a great opportunity for a part-time children's Ministry Coordinator to aid in the spiritual, mental and emotional growth of women and children. This position requires living on the Lydia Center property in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania; a farmhouse is available and part of the compensation. The Lydia Center is located on a beautiful 152-acre property. This mountain-top location provides a secluded and peaceful home to Lydia Center clients.

Although subject to change at the discretion of the Lydia Center, the current scheduled work hours for this position are Mondays - 7:30AM to 12PM & 1PM to 4:30PM; Tuesdays & Thursdays - 7:30AM to 12PM & 1PM to 2:30PM; Wednesdays - 7:30AM to 12PM & 1PM to 3PM; and Fridays - 8:30AM to 12PM. It is understood that, subject to occasional fluctuation, this position requires that you work thirty (30) hours per week.

The following is a partial list of responsibilities: Plan and teach regularly scheduled classes for children and women, lead daily classes for preschoolers, plan curriculum and coordinate volunteers for childcare, drive mothers and children. For an entire list of responsibilities and the physical demands of the job, please see the job description at http://waterstreetministries.org/AboutUs/Employment/CurrentOpenings.aspx. A college graduate or equivalent training in Childcare Provider ship and experience in 'rescue' or comparable work is essential.

A 403(b) Retirement Account, AFLAC benefits & life insurance are available. Compensation is provided for hours worked. Qualified candidates send resume and cover letter to Jane Keller, Director of Human Resources, Water Street Ministries PO Box 7267, Lancaster, PA 17604-7267 or HRoffice@waterstreetministries.org. To learn more about the Lydia Center, please see the following link: http://waterstreetministries.org/Ministries/LydiaCenter.aspx

BEST CHRISTIAN Workplaces 2009

Getting serious about being missional

Joining in God's activity in the world, We develop and nurture missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures.

By adopting this mission statement, developing "missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures" becomes the central task of Mennonite Church USA. This statement positions us to imagine a future where, in the words of Emil Brunner, "the church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning."

While the word "missional" continues to gain significance in our denomination, what it looks like to be a missional church remains elusive to many. Such is the case when we try to create a new world with our words.

Are we making progress in our attempts to embody the missional reality we desire? Is there need for course correction? In seeking answers to these questions, I conducted empirical research within Mennonite Church USA that identified a number of tensions that will need to be managed as we seek to embody the nature of a missional church. These tensions can inform how our denomination might best help increase positive missional tendencies while decreasing anti-missional tendencies that persist. I will describe five of these.

ANTI-MISSIONAL REFLECTION	POSITIVE MISSIONAL REFLECTION
The church as sending	The church as itself sent
Replicating	Reproducing
A church that exists for "us"	A church that exists for the sake of the world
Fixation on "edges" and "boundaries." Who is in and who is out?	Focus on the centrality of the way of Jesus to which all are called
Church as the steward and purveyor of society's values	Church as engaged with, but different from, society

1. The first tension is the transition from being a sending church to an understanding of the church as itself sent.

The institutionalization of the church in the 20th century reinforced notions that people are formed for ministry somewhere else for someplace else. Somewhere along the way, the church no longer saw the local context as a primary resource for spiritual formation and equipping for ministry. Some are sent, others stay home to support those who are formed for ministry in other places.

This is an anti-gospel understanding. Jesus understood the mission context as the preferred place to imagine how the kingdom is announced and witnesses embody the gospel (Luke 10). In order to increase positive missional tendencies, we will need to see the congregation as a primary place of formation for ministry so that all are sent.

2. The second tension is between replication and reproduction.

When we tell stories of churches that demonstrate "successful" missional practice, there is a persistent tendency to copy the activities and programs that appear to be successful.

Years ago, in response to a devastating upset in the hog market, our congregation began an annual hog roast to which our rural neighborhood was invited. As soon as this story was reported in the church press, I was amused to learn of five Mennonite congregations planning hog roasts for their neighbors. A number of them were town churches.

We need to tell these "success" stories in a way that highlights how congregations and their leaders are exegeting their community resulting in a contextually appropriate ministry. Recently, contextual exegesis has been named as one of the essential six pastoral competencies for missional leadership.

3. The third tension answers the question, For whom does the church exist?

There is a deep and persistent belief that the church exists for us rather than for the sake of the world. Conrad Kanagy's *Road Signs for the Journey* confirms this tendency.

After the preaching role, pastors understand their primary role as shaping the congregation's vision and equipping members for ministry. After the preaching role, congregational members hope the pastor's primary role is to provide pastoral care and counseling to the members.

Mennonites have a gift for hosting the stranger, so long as the space into which the stranger is welcomed remains "our" space. Becoming a missional church will require us to get hosted into the world's space and, in our spiritual discernment with the stranger, create a new space to incarnate the reign of God.

But much of our organizational energy has been focused on helping existing congregations be smoother-running machines for our members rather than forming every member for witness in the world.

4. Related to the third tension is the tension between focusing on boundaries or the center when it comes to matters of faith and life.

At some level, boundaries help us. We need to know the difference between the church and the world. In the words of Andrew Walls, we need to remain clear how the gospel is at home in every culture and how it is foreign to every culture. What is needed is a common understanding of how to read the Scriptures that reveal the way of Jesus.

The more clearly the center is articulated, the less attention boundaries require. The challenge in this tension is to equip the church to get better at naming the way of Jesus as the true way. We need a denominational system that can build our competency for scriptural discernment at every level of the church.

5. There is a tension within the church that has to do with our identity in the world.

There is the tension between the church that reflects dominant social values vs. understanding the church as engaged in but different from society. We struggle to understand what it means to be the church in a society that is not hostile to the church; society simply acts as though the church doesn't matter very much.

There remains a persistent consumer mentality within Mennonite Church USA that believes the church exists to help me live the life I have chosen a little bit better—which looks a lot like the American dream—rather than helping us be the vanguard of "the life that is to come."

Here are two examples that demonstrate progress in our aim to become a missional church.

1. At the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Columbus, Ohio, last year, delegates were more assertive in their call to be engaged in discerning the missional direction of the church than we have heard from previous delegations. The spiritual practice of dwelling in the Word received more affirmation from the delegates than anything else that happened in the assembly. The delegates are now pressing the Executive Board to integrate practices like dwelling in the Word into the discernment of our common faith and life as a seamless cloth. The delegates present denominational leaders a tremendous opportunity when they want the Bible to be more integrated in their discernment.

2. Delegates observed that Vision: Healing and Hope (see box) is growing in influence throughout the denomination. Vision: Healing and Hope is a thoroughly missional statement. Delegates—and here I quote from one group of delegates—asked denominational leaders to "be radical in changing the organizational makeup of the church to more clearly reflect our vision."

Let me suggest two key ingredients that can contribute to this radical approach to organizational change. First, the greatest opportunity for increasing our positive missional tendencies is to learn from those who are "working at the front." Those working at the front think about contextualization and incarnation in ways our existing congregations often don't. Those working at the front do it because they must. Our mission statement says that "we will develop and nurture Mennonite missional congregations of many cultures."

To date, our organizational system has focused almost entirely on the nurture of existing congregations while the development of missional Mennonite congregations has been, at best, a marginal focus in the denominational system. If we hope our denomination becomes a missional church, then we will no longer see church plants as our junior partners to whom we write checks and commission leaders.

The first key ingredient for radical organizational alignment is a denominational system that moves the developing congregations into the center of our structure as essential partners in a learning community where we all ask how the reign of God is being incarnated in authentic and contextual ways.

Second, some organizational models will reinforce positive missional tendencies more than others. In the 20th century, Mennonites learned to view the mission of the church in mechanistic or instrumental terms focused on accountable results. Because God is the determiner of results in a missional church, organizational alignment directed by accounting our results is not well matched to the goal of becoming a missional church.

To become missional we will need to shift our focus from measuring results to measuring meaning. This requires a paradigm shift from adaptive learning to generative learning and from mechanistic discussion to reflexive dialogue. Adaptive learning is focused on how we "keep our ground." Rather than ask, What are we accomplishing? generative learning asks the questions, What is being expressed that sounds like God's mission? What is being attracted? and, What is being legitimized? Mechanistic approaches to organizational change cast the church as a problem that needs to be solved. Reflexive dialogue suspends our assumptions and opens the space for the Spirit to move us to imagine new worlds. A second key ingredient for radical organizational alignment is an approach to organizational alignment that is focused less on accountable results and more on generative learning and reflexive dialogue.—*David Boshart is a member of Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board and first presented this research at the September 2009 all-boards meeting. Boshart is the pastor of the West Union Mennonite Church in Parnell, Iowa.*

Vision: Healing and Hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flows through us to the world.

Correction: South Central Conference is planting a church in Macon, Mo., not Macon, Miss. (April, page 47).

Scandinavian Mennonites gather for first time

Forty people from new Scandinavian Mennonite Network meet in person.

Photo provided

Fredrik Wenell, Else-Marie Carlsson, Jonas Melin (the organizer) and Disa Rutschman talk together at the Scandinavian Anabaptist gathering.

As Anabaptists in a country without a historic Anabaptist presence, how do you find a community that is essential to practicing your faith?

In December 2009, a group of about 40 people gathered in Stockholm, Sweden, to work at answering that question and to participate in the first physical gathering of the Scandinavian Anabaptist Network.

This newest network is one of several that have sprouted across the globe as Anabaptist Christians seek support and fellowship with others who share their convictions.

"Anabaptist networks are appearing in other parts of the world and have potential to be significant grass-roots kingdom movements," writes Tim Foley, Mennonite Mission Network's Director for Europe. "These networks are an effective way (with a minimum of overhead) to resource Christians who have discovered Anabaptism to be crucial for their understanding of discipleship and mission."

Tom and Disa Rutschman, Mennonite Mission Network partners in Jokkmokk, Sweden, participated in the Scandinavian network meeting, which included authors, peace activists, theology students and seminary professors. Margot and Stephen Longley, who are partners with Mission Network in Finland, also attended.

The fledgling Scandinavian network invited Stuart Murray to speak at their first official gathering. Murray is active in the Anabaptist Network in the United Kingdom, a partner organization with Mennonite Mission Network.

His presentations focused on the nature of post-Christendom, mission in post-Christendom and the core convictions of the U.K. Anabaptist network.

Arne Rasmusson, Swedish Anabaptist theologian, attended the meetings and reflected on Murray's words. "Something like the diaspora ecclesiology of [John Howard] Yoder, though it may take different forms, seems necessary for a church that wants a measure of freedom from its bondage to Christendom," he says.

Murray also led seminars with local church planters, reports Jonas Melin, the current network organizer. "Stuart Murray taught on church planting in practice," writes Melin in his blog. "He went through 12 different models and looked at the strengths and weaknesses of different models, giving concrete examples and practical tips. Many testified that they recognized themselves, had 'aha experiences' and helped each other move forward."—*Melanie Hess of Mennonite Mission Network*

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'Turning toward peace' for Afghan children

Initiative redirects war tax dollars to MCC's Global Family education program.

Students study peace education at a school funded by MCC partner Help the Afghan Children outside of Kabul, Afghanistan.

Each year, thousands of people in the United States decide to witness for peace by withholding the portion of their taxes that would support war efforts and using it to support peace.

For those who make the choice to withhold, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. offers the "Turning toward peace" initiative—an invitation to sow the seeds of peace by redirecting war tax dollars to help children in Afghanistan through MCC's Global Family education sponsorship program. In Afghanistan, Global Family works with MCC partner Help the Afghan Children, an organization that addresses education and peacemaking concerns.

Since 1996, MCC and its Global Family program have provided more than $7 million in humanitarian and educational assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

Global Family sponsorships help maintain peace rooms—welcoming, stimulating and safe places for students to work on meaningful projects related to peace.

Students also acquire skills to help heal the trauma experienced through the violence around them. Children also receive school kits, computers and other educational supplies.

Titus Peachey, director of peace education for MCC U.S., says the struggle with conscience regarding taxes that support war has a long history.

"European Hutterites in the 1500s, Prussian Mennonites in the late 1700s and contemporary peacemakers from Canada and the United States to Ethiopia and Japan are among those who have wrestled with this question," says Peachey.

For people of faith, theological commitments play a key role. According to Peachey, most who have chosen to withhold believe, "If we cannot conscientiously participate in war with our bodies, we cannot pay for it either. We need to give our money to causes that build up rather than destroy the presence of God in each person," he says.

Most inform their governments of their actions. "Given the presence of Western military action in Afghanistan today, the opportunity to contribute to peacemaking there is timely," says Peachey. "Equally important is the way in which withholding war taxes challenges our own systemic militarism."

Find more information at us.mcc.org/wartaxes and donate.mcc.org/global-family—*Ed Nyce of Mennonite Central Committee*

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Urban leaders form global network

A newly-formed network of urban Anabaptist leaders facilitated by Mennonite Central Committee is developing organically. Person by person, they are gradually connecting with each other because they share the commonality of engaging the city as Anabaptists. The first steps took place last August, when a group of urban leaders, most from Philadelphia, flew to Seoul, South Korea, where they were hosted by the Korea Anabaptist Center. KAC participates in MCC's exchange programs and was interested in more interaction, and Philadelphia is home to the largest group of MCC urban constituents on the East Coast.—*Linda Espenshade of MCC*

High demand for Bible study in Argentina

Leader is Mennonite Mission Network International Partnership Associate.

Expectant students gathered around open Bibles on March 20 when a new branch of the Instituto Bíblico Toba (Toba Bible Institute) in Argentina's Chaco Province began classes in Espinillo, 70 kilometers north of Castelli.

The need for another location grew out of the excitement generated last December, when 35 students graduated from Instituto Bíblico Toba's first three-year program in Castelli. In April, a second group of students began classes in Castelli. The student groups meet in churches.

"Learning together is a great experience," says José Luis Oyanguren, who leads the Bible Institute's teaching team. "We are encouraged by many who are eagerly waiting to begin the coming year's studies."

Instituto Bíblico Toba graduates named some of the benefits they gained from studying together:

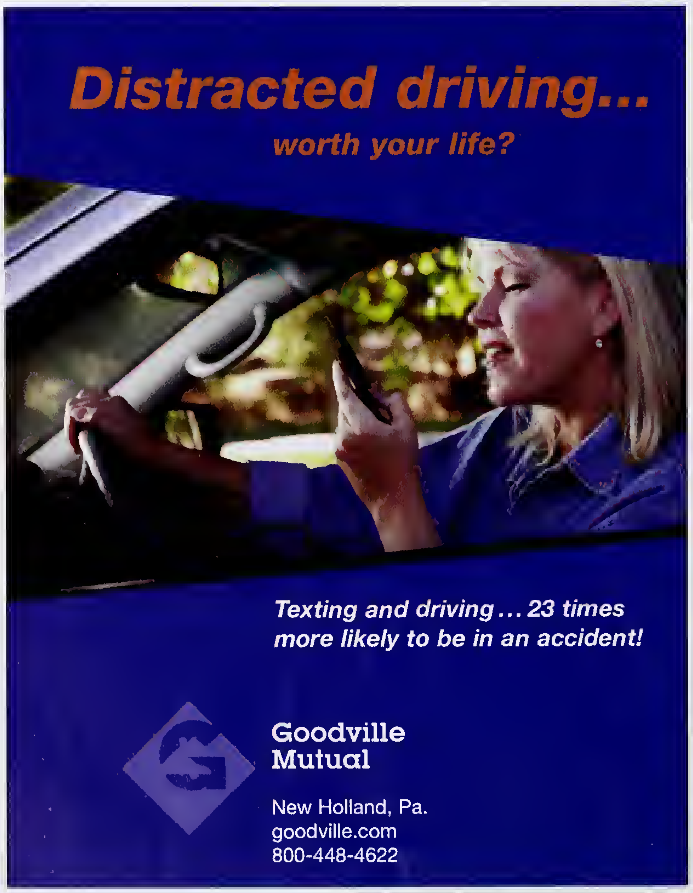
- Learning with and from each other knit us, as members of various denominations into a more cohesive body of Christ.
- Studying in our mother tongue helps us rediscover our identity and our value in the sight of God.
- Knowing more about the "hidden" parts of God's Word helped us better teach our own congregations.

Alfonsina and José Luis Oyanguren and their three children are members of Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Argentina (Argentine Mennonite Church) from Buenos Aires province. They became Mennonite Mission Network International Partnership Associates working with the Mennonite team in the Chaco in 2004.

In addition to teaching at the Bible school and participating in indigenous church life, the Oyangurens continue to invest considerable energy in perfecting their Toba language skills and deepening their understanding of Toba cultural values.

"What is important is to maintain a learning spirit and an appreciation for the indigenous worldview, for in this we communicate the good news," José Luis Oyanguren says.

Oyanguren, along with two Toba teachers, was chosen by the Chaco Province Department of Education to write a Toba grammar curriculum and train bilingual (Toba/Spanish) teachers in the Castelli area.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*



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From left: Damián Díaz, Carlos Aurelio, José Luis Oyanguren and Feliciano Flores celebrate during the Toba Bible Institute's first graduating ceremony in December 2009. Thirty-five total students graduated from the program.

A woman walks along a devastated street in Chile.

EMM contributes to rebuilding in Chile

Several days after the powerful 8.8 earthquake struck Chile on Feb. 27, Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Michael Hostetter, Dustin Gingrich and Travis Kisamore traveled north with Chilean co-workers to assist in the hard-hit coastal regions around Concepcion.

As they gave tents, food and water to homeless people, Hostetter said, they witnessed extensive destruction from both the earthquake and tidal waves from the tsunami. More than a million homes were destroyed. There is also extensive damage to roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

Hostetter said that in the region they visited many people had lost everything and were sitting around in a dazed state, staring at heaps of rubble that had been their homes. The team took a lot of time just to listen and pray with people who were both physically and spiritually crushed.

In a second trip several days later, Dustin and Sarah Gingrich and Travis and Bekii Kisamore traveled north again. They visited homes and assessed next steps.

Local friends and churches in Puerto Montt donated stuffed toys and balls to share with children in the earthquake-affected area. The EMM team said the government is doing a good job of providing temporary shelters for the homeless. Designate funds for "Chile relief" and donate online at emm.org/donate or mail checks to P.O. Box 458, Salunga, PA 17538.—*Jewel Showalter of EMM*

LEADERSHIP OPENINGS
FOR MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PROGRAMS

MCC REPRESENTATIVE IN ASIA:
BANGLADESH in Dhaka (June 2010)

MCC REPRESENTATIVES IN AFRICA:
BURKINA FASO in Ouagadougou (Jan. 2011)
CHAD in N'Djamena (Jan. 2011)
ETHIOPIA in Addis Ababa (Jan. 2011)
MOZAMBIQUE in Beira (Jan. 2011)

MCC REPRESENTATIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:
LEBANON AND SYRIA in Beirut (June 2011)

MCC REPRESENTATIVE IN EUROPE:
SOUTHEAST EUROPE in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (June 2011)

FOR ASIA AND AFRICA, CONTACT BECKY STAHLY: rss@mcc.org
FOR MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE, CONTACT MARSHA JONES: mgj@mennonitecc.ca

Funds boost projects for Global South churches

Mennonite World Conference funds provide water, church buildings and more.

Fresh, clean water from a new well in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is a source of joy and hope. The well is at the heart of the "Women & Water for Life" project of the Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania (Tanzania Mennonite Church). A $10,000 gift from the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Global Church Sharing Fund (GCSF) early in 2010 is helping make it happen. The church and local community raised $3,000.

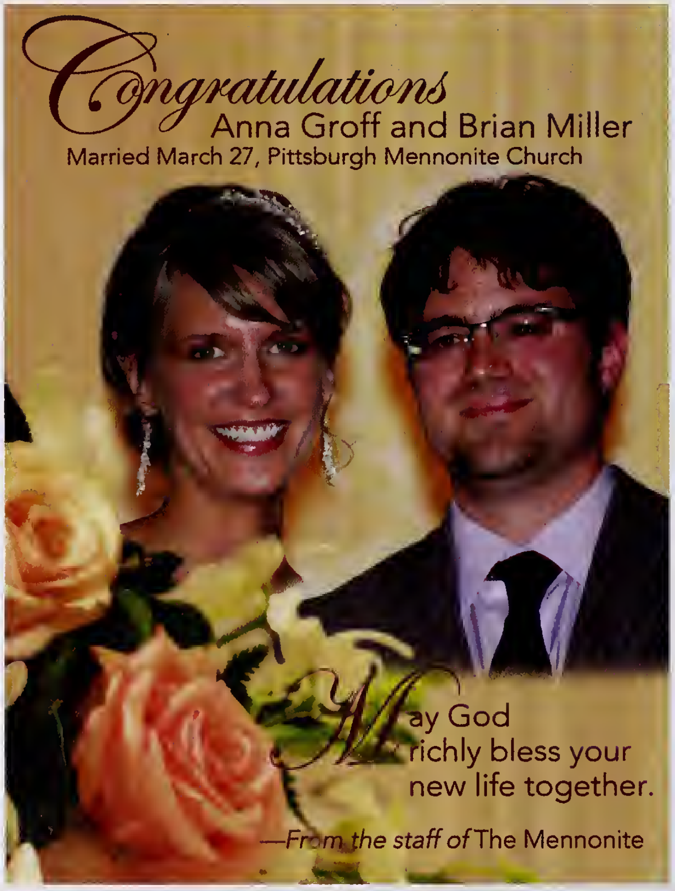
Other GCSF gifts have been approved or are in process. A $10,000 grant is helping train pastors and church leaders in Honduras. The San Marcos de Ocotepeque Mennonite Church there also has developed a relationship with Mennonites from Millersburg, Ohio, over the past five years. The Ohio group helped build the Koinonia Mennonite Center, which is used for the training program.

The Bible Missionary Church in Myanmar began to construct a church building in January. The building also will house the mission board head office. The church raised $12,500, which along with the $10,000 gift from MWC allowed the project to proceed.

In Jamaica, the Good Tidings Mennonite Church proposed expanding its building to accommodate enhanced community outreach and youth ministry as well as renovating its worship space. The church has raised $18,000 and still needs to raise $2,000 to add to the $10,000 GCSF gift to complete the project.

In the past 18 months, MWC has sent Jubilee gifts of up to $10,000 to churches in Vietnam, Congo, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Honduras and Colombia totaling $94,600. In addition to the projects described above, funds have been used by MWC-related churches for translation of the MWC Shelf book *What We Believe Together* (Vietnam), church construction (Ghana), education seminar (Congo) and an assessment of the agricultural capacity of church lands (Zimbabwe).

MWC established the GCSF in 1997 at Assembly 13 in India, with individual donors, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Mutual Aid making initial contributions totaling $1 million. The funds were to be shared in the spirit of biblical Jubilee (Leviticus 25) with Anabaptist-related churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The balance in the GCSF as of Dec. 31, 2009, was $265,856. To donate, go to www.mwc-cmm.org.—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference*


Congratulations
Anna Groff and Brian Miller
Married March 27, Pittsburgh Mennonite Church

May God richly bless your new life together.

—From the staff of The Mennonite

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ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (July 23 - August 4)
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JAMAICA - IT'S PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 28 - February 6)
CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 7-18)
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE TOUR (February 23 - March 5)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 20 - April 2)
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Dutch Mennonites voice views on war

Leaders send letter expressing concern for increased troops in Afghanistan

Dutch Mennonites are expressing their views against participation in war in a variety of ways. Henk Stenvers, Mennonite World Conference General Council delegate from the Netherlands says, "The board of ADS [Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit] is convinced that it is the task of the church to witness about the peace of Christ and not to give the government arguments to prolong involvement in any war."

Stenvers was part of a delegation of the Dutch Council of Churches that spoke with government representatives in 2007, when the government was contemplating prolonging the Dutch presence in Afghanistan.

The ADS board also decided to suspend its membership in IKV Pax Christi (Church Peace Council) after its director published an article in support of prolonging Dutch involvement in the war in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. The board feels the stance of this organization implies agreement with the concept of "just war." Before proposing to the conference to end its membership in IKV, the ADS board will meet with the IKV board. Leaders of the Dutch Mennonite Church also sent a letter to Mennonite Church USA in December 2009, expressing their concern about President Barack Obama's call for the U.S. military's escalation of troops in Afghanistan.

"The [U.S.] decision felt so contrary to President Obama's stance during the election campaign. … The letter was meant as a sign of solidarity with the search for peace of Mennonite Church USA," says Stenvers.

Ed Diller, Mennonite Church USA moderator, responded with a letter of appreciation, saying, "Along with you, Mennonite Church USA is deeply concerned about military buildup in Afghanistan." Diller included resources Mennonite Church USA made available to conferences and congregations, as well as a copy of an advertisement churches could place in their local newspapers. Diller asked the Dutch Mennonites to "pray that we may be bold in proclaiming Christ as the Prince of Peace."

Dutch Mennonites have tended to express their views through ecumenical organizations, but it is difficult to have their voice heard. Stenvers says he thinks Dutch Mennonites could follow the example of Mennonite Church USA in encouraging churches to speak out and be more active in expressing the opinion of its church leaders to the government.—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference*

AMBS
Our doors are open to you this summer.

Come to the summer open house at
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Monday, June 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Sit in on a class, meet faculty and students, and explore our MDiv and MA programs. Visit **www.ambs.edu/openhouse** to register by **June 14.**

Located in Elkhart, Ind., AMBS offers graduate degree and certificate programs in ministry and theological studies.

CALENDAR

Annual Lancaster Family History Conference, May 8; 8:30 a.m.-4:15 p.m., at Willow Valley Resort. Theme of this year's annual genealogy conference is, "Back to Our Roots: Celebrating 300 Years of Lancaster County History." Keynote speakers are author Jack Brubaker (aka "The Scribbler" of Lancaster New Era newspaper) and historian Steve Nolt. Call 717-393-9745 to register.

May 25-29, 2010. **St Jacobs Mennonite Church**, **"*Quilts for the World*"**. See the work of talented local quilters, daily demos and gift boutique. All proceeds to MCC. Part of the Quilt & Fibre Art Festival Waterloo Region, Ontario. www.stjacobs.com or 1-800-265-3353

Idaho Mennonite World Relief Festival. This annual auction of handmade quilts, afghans, wall-hangings, furniture and other handcrafted items is held at The College Church of the Nazarene at 504 E. Dewey in Nampa, Idaho. Proceeds benefit MCC and CATCH, a local program to help homeless families. An event for the whole family, there are activities for children, homemade pies and a country store with many irresistible goods for sale. More information is available at www.idahomrs.org.

WORKERS

Dauji, Silas, was licensed toward ordination Feb. 21 as pastor at Fairhaven Mennonite, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Founatin, Brian, ended a term as lead pastor at Peace Chapel, New Cumberland, Pa., on Jan. 31.

Garber, Shirley, ended a term as deaconess at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Feb. 15.

Mast, Lois Stoltzfus, was licensed for specific ministry March 14 as youth pastor at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.

Schantz, Merle, began a term as associate pastor at Lebanon Christian Fellowship, Lebanon, Pa., on Feb. 21.

Stoltzfus, George, ended a term as CEO of Friendship Community, a conference agency, Landisville, Pa., on Jan. 1.

OBITUARIES

Anderson, David, 96, Hesston, Kan., died March 8. Spouse: Elta Holaway Anderson (deceased). Parents: Albert and Susanna Miller Anderson. Children: Barbara Graber, Kathy Snyder, Diane Amstutz, Dave; seven grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Showalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Boshart, Harold Lyle, 73, Carthage, N.Y., died Feb. 27. Spouse: Constance Joslyn Boshart. Parents: Clayton and Florence Bast Boshart. Children: Daniel, Brian, Timothy, Shawn, Kevin; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 3 at First Mennonite Church, New Breman, N.Y.

Breneman, Clifford W., 88, Manheim, Pa., died March 3. Spouse: Jean Wolgemuth Breneman. Parents: Christian E. and Lizzie Witmer Breneman. Children: Janet M. Breneman, Melvin R., Lois Mae Hege, Kenneth L., J. Larry; 14 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 8 at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa.

Brown, Malinda "Linda" Rose Lingenfelder Regier, 92, Newton, Kan., died March 7. Spouse: Max Regier (deceased). Spouse: Lelus Brown (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Susanna Lingenfelder. Children: Rosalind Scudder, Max Regier, Mary Regier, Robert Regier, Melissa Ann Keenan, Mark Regier, Bill Brown, Anita Sadowsky, Martin Brown; 24 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Courtney, Mabel King, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died March 8. Spouse: Leore V. Courtney (deceased). Parents: William Henry and Carrie Anne Nofzinger King. Funeral: March 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Deckert, Ronald L., 67, Freeman, S.D., died March 9. Spouse: ElVera Hofer Deckert. Parents: Herman and Delilah Ratzlaff Deckert. Children: Melissa Deckert, Darren. Funeral: March 13 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Derstine, Samuel Nyce, 89, Souderton, Pa., died March 17. Spouse: Alma D. Kulp Derstine (deceased). Parents: Abram and Minnie Nyce Derstine. Children: Emilie D. Watson, Leon K., Harley K., Rodney K.; 14 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Drawbond, Mary Anna, 84, Phoenix, Ariz., died March 9. Parents: Joseph Samuel and Ella May Harshbarger. Funeral: March 15 at Glencroft Chapel, Glendale, Ariz.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Eichorn, Virginia Rae, 87, Grantsville, Md., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Alvin B. Eichorn (deceased). Parents: Leafy Leith. Children: Dwight, Donna Winters, Janet Blocher, Arthur, Leonard, Keith, Robert; 19 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Memorial service: March 13 at Newman Funeral Home, Grantsville.

Enns, Roger L., 62, Hutchinson, Kan., died March 15. Spouse: Judith K. Crumpacker Enns. Parents: Menno and Edith Loeffler Enns. Children: Raymond. Funeral: March 17 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Frederick, Sara Lu Graber, 78, Eugene, Ore., died March 23. Spouse: Charles Richard Frederick. Parents: Joseph and Barbara Ann Rich Graber. Children: Charles, Jr., Catherine F. Roth, Christine Lu Frederick Urban, Mary Jo Frederick Reimer, Peter G.; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 2 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa.

Funk, Ronald Peter, 94, Aberdeen, Idaho, died March 22. Spouse: Elva Enns Funk. Parents: Peter F. and Maria Wiebe Funk. Children: Ronald Kent, Connie Shelley; four grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at Aberdeen First Mennonite Church.

Graber, Marjorie Ann Ewert, 77, Freeman, S.D., died March 11. Spouse: Cleon Graber. Parents: Alfred and Bertha Tieszen Ewert. Children: Teresa Dick, Linden; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 15 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

King, Martha Kulp, 92, Archbold, Ohio, died March 7. Spouse: Orlen King (deceased). Parents: Christian and Emma Blosser Kulp. Children: Delbert L., Velma I. Ulrich, Kermit, Gerald A., seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 11 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

King, Uarda C. Birky, 88, Valparaiso, Ind., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Harold C. King (deceased). Parents: Jake and Emma Miller Birky. Children: Judy Bachert, Janice Trully, Marvin, Keith, Byron, Rodney; 18 grandchildren; 31great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.

Kuhns, Opal Katherine Schrock, 84, Glendale, Ariz., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Kenneth Keith Kuhns (deceased). Parents: Dave and Bena Roth Schrock. Children: David, Ken, Barbara Weaver, Nellen Plouffe.; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Glencroft Retirement Community, Glendale.

Lapp, Wayne, 81, Kalispell, Mont., died March 18 following a stroke. Spouse: Mary Eby Lapp. Parents: Frank and Lena Kauffman Lapp. Children: Robert, Sandi Heine, Nancy Kanagy, Julie Lapp, John; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

RESOURCES

Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2010, $24) is the fifth and final book in Peterson's series of "conversations" in spiritual theology. Here he brings the voice of Scripture—especially Paul's letter to the Ephesians—and the voice of the contemporary Christian congregation together to unpack what it means to fully grow up "to the stature of Christ."

New Perspectives in Believers Church Ecclesiology, edited by Abe Dueck, Helmut Harder and Karl Koop (CMU Press, 2010, $29.50), collects 17 essays that engage Believers Church theology with topics such as denominationalism, the sacramental tradition, the Emerging Church movement and global Christianity.

Donkeys and Kings and Other 'Tails' of the Bible by Tripp York, illustrated by Zak Upright (Resource Publications, 2010, $11), brings to life eight animal stories from the Bible as seen from the animals' perspectives.

Science and Origins: Probing the Deeper Questions by Holmes Rolston III, edited by Carl S. Helrich (Pandora Press, 2010, $21.50), includes presentations from Goshen (Ind.) College's Conference on Religion and Science, a yearly lecture series featuring distinguished scholars involved in a dialogue between religion and science. Rolston, an environmental ethicist, points out that we are at one of the rupture points of history in which we face the prospect of great tragedy.

Jesus and Money: A Guide for Times of Financial Crisis by Ben Witherington III (Brazos Press, 2010, $18.99) explores what the Bible does and doesn't say about money and examines what Jesus and his earliest followers taught about wealth and poverty, money and debt, and tithing and sacrificial giving to help readers understand the proper role of money in modern Christian life.

Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation by J. Nelson Kraybill (Brazos Press, 2010, $21.99) offers a fresh interpretation of Revelation that highlights its liturgical structure. The book includes questions and illustrations that turn readers' attentions toward 21st-century issues of empire, worship and allegiance.

Unlearning Protestantism: Sustaining Christian community in an Unstable Age by Gerald W. Schlabach (Brazos Press, 2010, $28.99) encourages readers to relearn certain virtues that all Christian communities need to sustain their communal lives. It offers a vision for the right and faithful roles of authority, stability and loyal dissent in Christian communal life.

Lewis, Martha "Marti" M.M., 57, South Bend, Ind., died Jan. 5. Funeral: Jan. 9 at Kern Road Mennonite church, South Bend.

Lichti, Herbert V., 87, Reedley, Calif., died March 24. Spouse: Elsie Anna Heer Lichti (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Babette Horsch Lichti. Children: Fran Loewen, Jim, Christi Lichti; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 2 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Meyers, Martha Hunsberger Godshalk, 88, Sarasota, Fla., died March 2. Spouse: Clarence Meyers. Parents: Charles Matthew and Susie Hunsberger Godshalk. Children: Richard, Edward, Thomas; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 7 at Doylestown Mennonite Church, Doylestown, Pa.

Miller, Betty R., 63, Berlin, Ohio, died Feb. 25. Parents: Roman H. and Elva H. Raber Miller. Funeral: Feb. 28 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Musser, Miriam L. Good, 66, Tunkhannock, Pa., died Feb. 28 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Robert Musser. Parents: Lester and Maggie Good. Children: Maria, Tim; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at Community Bible Church, Tunkhannock.

Schmidt, Edna Unger, 97, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 12. Spouse: Ferd Schmidt. Parents: P.N. and Mary Seibel Unger. Children: Jerol, Ronnie, Larry, Sharon Schroeder; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Slade, Graham Laurence, 76, Nashville, Tenn., died March 12 of cancer. Children: Angie Slade, Michael, Amy Binkley; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at Belmont United Methodist Church, Nashville.

Slifer, Rita Royer, 78, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 10, 2009. Parents: Rudy and Elta Runte Royer. Children: Gaye Pilgrim, Anne Slifer; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 17 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Stuckey, Mable Klopfenstein Gisel, 101, Archbold, Ohio, died March 8. Spouse: Lloyd Gisel (deceased). Spouse: Dennis Stuckey (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Jemima Aeschliman Klopfenstin. Children: Lois Leidig, Ruth Nafziger, Lavonne Bixler; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; 15 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 12 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Stucky, Kathleen Ruth Krehbiel, 85, Moundridge, Kan., died Feb. 8. Parents: Herbert J. and Esther Goering Krehbiel. Children: Roger, Tom, Shirley Stucky, Patsy Jean Montoya; seven grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

Stucky, Leota Grace, 99, Moundridge, Kan., died March 20. Parents: Edward J. and Lena Gering Stucky. Funeral: March 23 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

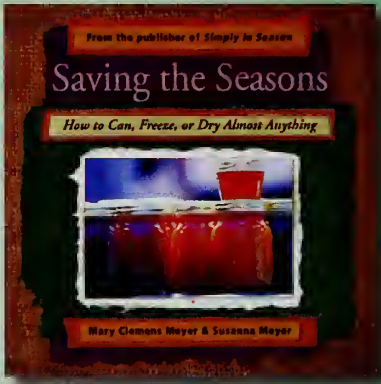
Wiebe, Stella Enns, 94, North Newton, Kan., died March 9. Spouse: Walter Enns (deceased). Parents: Abram Peter and Maria Sukau Enns. Children: Sharon Stucky, Paul, Miriam Crehan, six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen, Idaho.

Yoder, Reuben A., 71, Arthur, Ill., died March 5. Spouse: Janice Belton Canull Yoder. Parents: Abe D. and Amanda Helmuth Yoder. Children: Melanie, Kevin, Michelle Nelson, Robin Caull-Fonner, Jana DeLong; two grandchildren; nine step-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at Arthur Mennonite Church.

Yousey, Irene Widrick, 84, Lowville, N.Y., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Benjamin Yousey. Parents: Jacov and Lena Martin Widrick. Children: Lena Mae Martin, Yvonne Dunn, Marcia Moshier, Jane Nafziger, Beverly Chartrand; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Croghan Mennonite Church, Croghan, N.Y.

Herald Press

New From Herald Press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***Associate pastor of youth and family ministry*.** **Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church** (adjacent to the campus of Hesston College) is seeking an additional pastoral staff member with emphasis on youth and family ministry. Responsibilities include nurturing spiritual growth and faith commitment, resourcing Christian education ministries and developing lay leadership. EOE. Send cover letter and resumé to James Krehbiel: jkrehbiel2@cox.net or 120 Kingsway, Hesston, KS 67062

Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind., a globally-minded congregation committed to being Anabaptist in an urban context, seeks ***half-time pastor for youth and young adult formation***. Candidates must have demonstrable abilities to work with and relate to youth and young adults, a college degree and some biblical training and/or experience, and an ability to communicate via electronic media. For further information about the congregation and applications procedures go to: http://www.krmc.net.

Penn Foundation, a Mennonite-affiliated provider of behavioral health-care services in Sellersville, Pa., seeks a ***CEO*** to lead its $20 million/370-employee organization. Please submit inquiries to Caryn Howell at caryn@stiffneygroup.com or 574-537-8736.

Pleasantview Home, a Mennonite-affiliated retirement community in Kalona, Iowa, seeks an ***executive director*** to lead its $5 million/135-employee organization. Please submit inquiries to Caryn Howell at caryn@stiffneygroup.com or 574-537-8736.

You are invited to a **125th-year anniversary celebration** May 23, 2010; Sunday school 9:15 a.m., worship service 10:30 a.m. Features include special music, an audiovisual presentation, video featuring the music of Zion, exhibits, fellowship meal and the release of the book by Elwood Yoder *We're Marching to Zion.* For more information go to www.zmcva.org or call 540-896-7577.

Landis Homes, an aging services provider serving Lancaster County, Pa., and the surrounding area, is seeking a ***director of pastoral care and church relations***. Responsible to give leadership to the pastoral care program and coordinate an expanding church relations effort. Prefer an individual with pastoral or chaplaincy experience, the ability to lead a team and collaborate with peers and an understanding of and appreciation for the Mennonite faith. Submit resumé to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543, fax: 717-581-3899 or email: ssmoker@landishomes.org. For more information about Landis Homes, visit our Web site: www.landishomes.org.

Landis Homes, an aging services provider serving Lancaster County, Pa., and surrounding area, is seeking a ***vice president of finance/CFO*** who will monitor the financial status of Landis Homes and provide guidance to its financial direction. Qualifications include a college degree in accounting, finance or business administration, and experience in senior living finance operations or related health-care financial operations. Professional certification (CPA) is preferred, as are effective communication skills, ability to lead a team and collaborate with peers and an understanding of and appreciation for the Mennonite faith. Submit resumé to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543, fax: 717-581-3899 or email: aheinly@landishomes.org. For more information about Landis Homes, visit our Web site: www.landishomes.org.

Salem Mennonite Church of Tofield, Alberta, Canada, ***is celebrating 100 years as a congregation July 24-25***. We would love to have you help us celebrate this historic and joyous event. Preregistration by May 31 is imperative so we can properly plan for this time together. For further information and/or to preregister contact; Joe and Elaine Kauffman by mail: Box 212 Tofield, AB TOB 4JO, phone: 780-662-2344; email: jolane72@gmail.com.

Goshen College seeks applicants for a ***full-time nursing faculty member*** to teach psychiatric/mental-health nursing courses in the classroom and clinical setting. The ideal candidate will bring significant experience in nursing practice and nursing education. Doctorate in nursing or doctoral candidate preferred, master's degree in nursing required. For further details and to apply, see the position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is a liberal arts institution affiliated with Mennonite Church USA.

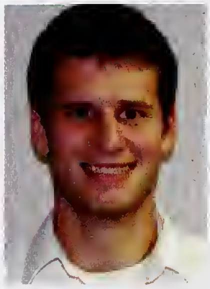
Eastern Mennonite University seeks qualified candidates for the following positions:

Assistant registrar—The assistant registrar serves as the manager for the registration component of the shared administrative database. Must understand the undergraduate curriculum and communicate related policies and procedures. Bachelor's degree required. Work experience in an educational institution is desired. Database management experience is strongly recommended.

Associate campus pastor—The associate campus pastor responsibilities include leadership and training of the pastoral and ministry assistant programs, advising and assisting faith-related student organizations and working with activities and programs that provide opportunities for students to explore a call to pastoral ministry and congregational leadership. Qualifications: master of divinity or equivalent training preferred, training and/or experience in counseling and/or youth ministry preferred. Position is part-time.

To apply send a letter of application and resume to hr@emu.edu. For more information, visit our Web site: www.emu.edu/humanresources.

Risk management



Thomas Dunn is associate pastor of youth and young adults at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

At a recent youth worker conference, I was both surprised and a bit insulted when I learned that I still fit the "adolescent" category. A study into the development of healthy adolescents now shows that the human brain is not completely developed until age 27—meaning anyone under that age is still considered an adolescent. This was mildly offensive to me because of my hyper independence, my pride and my role as a youth pastor. How could anyone call me an adolescent? My whole job is to minister to adolescents. I am definitely not one myself.

After further reflection, and learning more about the researcher's conclusions, the idea of adolescence extending to the mid-20s does make sense to me, particularly the idea of risk-taking. It is clear (or at least it should be) that someone in their mid-20s is not going through the same changes as someone in their teens. The teenage years are highlighted by the hormonal activity of the brain and changes that it brings to the body and psyche. By later adolescence, the hormones have already done their work, the body is fully developed, but the brain is still making significant changes, particularly in the frontal lobe, which, among other things, is responsible for decision-making and risk management.

What I needed to do was understand that still being an adolescent is different from still acting like a teenager. What these researchers are doing is giving us a neurological framework to understand the behavioral differences between a 25-year-old and a 4-year-old. So what is the point of all this? There are two significant areas where I believe this directly affects young adults in the church. The first is personal risk management, and the second is congregational risk management.

We need space for young adult risk-takers, and we need to retain space for the wise and experienced adults.

The adolescent brain is designed to take risks, as it is a built-in feature. However, there are healthy risks and unhealthy risks. All risks have inherent danger or they would not be risks. Unhealthy risks involve drug and alcohol abuse, sexual experimentation or criminal activity. Healthy risks include road trips, launching out on one's own, traveling to a different culture, living in a different culture, starting a new job and more. Brain researchers tell us what we have known for years: Stepping out on our own and taking a risk is vital for our development as individuals. If young adults are not taking any healthy risks in their lives, there is a much greater danger that they will be susceptible to the unhealthy risks.

Risk management also comes into play in the life of the church. Through the history of the church, it is the younger generation that has made up the movers and shakers of the church. We can look back to the 12 disciples and see that they were all in the waning years of their adolescence and not afraid to take a risk for the kingdom of God. We can go back to the 16th century and see that it was men in their late adolescence that started the Anabaptist movement by rebaptizing each other in a small Swiss apartment. We can look to our present-day church in North America and around the world and see that Christians in their 20s are clamoring to take risks for their Savior and their church. The question is how the church is responding to this.

Mennonite Church USA has done an excellent job of recognizing the passion, energy and willingness of young people to take risks. At the congregational level there is also positive re-enforcement for the vigor of young adults, which I appreciate. The problem arises when the passion, vigor and risk-taking idealism of a young adult runs into the status quo of the critical mass of an established Mennonite congregation. The young adult is armed with the radical words of Jesus. The post young adult is armed with wisdom that comes with age and experience of at one time having been a young adult. The young adult has a brain programmed to take risk. The adult has a brain that is looking to avoid risks.

As the body of Christ we need to learn how to manage our risks. We need space for young adult risk-takers, and we need to retain space for the wise and experienced adults. I believe that when either one of these predispositions becomes the status quo, the church, the body of Jesus Christ, is in danger.

FILM REVIEW

The Ghost Writer (PG-13) depicts a ghostwriter hired to complete the memoirs of a former British prime minister and uncovers secrets that put his own life in jeopardy. This is the rare political thriller that deals intelligently with today's headlines. It is also artfully shot.—*Gordon Houser*

DVD REVIEW

In **Brothers** (R) a young mother learns of her husband's death in Afghanistan, only to find out later he survived. The film alternates between scenes of his captivity and torture in Afghanistan and the family's attempts to heal. His return illustrates the horrific ripple effect of post-traumatic stress disorder from war.—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS

Hunger and Happiness: Feeding the Hungry, Nourishing Our Souls by L. Shannon Jung (Augsburg Books, 2009, $15.99) exposes the atrocities of a global food system whereby the affluent "feed" at the expense of others. It explores how complicity in the hunger of others contributes to the "spiritual malnourishment" of the well-fed. Jung calls us "to access the spiritual abundance that gives meaning and purpose, satisfaction and joy … to human life."—*gh*

Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church by Merold Westphal (Baker-Academic, 2009, $19.99) introduces current philosophical thinking related to interpreting the Bible. He says "our interpretations are relative to (conditioned by) the presuppositions we bring with us," and these are not absolute. Such relativism, he writes, "is by no means the same as the relativism in which 'anything goes.'"—*gh*

Happiness is not the only thing

We're seeing happiness measurements often in the media. Look, for example, at the list of the happiest countries on Earth in our February issue (page 11). A Web site explains the method for arriving at such a list, but it seemed too complicated for me.

In the March 22 issue of *The New Yorker*, Elizabeth Kolbert looks at new books on happiness. She refers to a 1978 study of a group of lottery winners that showed they were no happier than a group of victims of devastating accidents.

Happiness studies have shown that "it's not just hitting the jackpot that fails to lift spirits," Kolbert writes. "A whole range of activities that people tend to think will make them happy—getting a raise, moving to California, having kids—do not, it turns out, have that effect."

In his book *The Politics of Happiness: What Government Can Learn from the New Research on Well-Being* (Princeton), Derek Bok points out that America's increase in per capita income in the past 50 years has not brought more happiness. He then asks, "What is the point of working such long hours and risking environmental disaster in order to keep on doubling and redoubling our Gross Domestic Product?"

He also notes that job loss has been shown to be more upsetting than divorce or separation. Nevertheless, the United States, Bok writes, does "less than virtually any other nation to cushion the shock of unemployment."

Happiness Around the World: The Paradox of Happy Peasants and Miserable Millionaires by Carol Graham (Oxford) studies countries around the world and concludes that "the relationship between money and well-being turns out to be a lot less straightforward than is generally assumed."

Graham notes that the proportion of Nigerians who rate themselves happy is as high as that of Japanese, whose per-capita G.D.P. is almost 25 times as great. And the percentage of Bangladeshis who report themselves satisfied is twice that of Russians, who are four times as rich.

What to do about this is less clear. As Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen says, "The grumbling rich man may well be less happy than the contented peasant, but he does have a higher standard of living." But she doesn't see the point of trying to convince the "happy peasant" that he ought to be miserable.

These books raise the question of how much governments should take such happiness studies into account in making policy.

Kolbert wonders if this is the best approach. What if, she asks, America's increased consumption in the past 50 years had increased our happiness? "Surely, trashing the planet is just as wrong if people take pleasure in the process as it is if they don't," she writes. "Happiness is a good thing; it's just not the only thing."

The Bible's take on happiness is different. "Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked" (Psalm 1:1). "Happy are those who make the Lord their trust" (Psalm 40:4). The word only appears once in the New Testament.

In her book *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Eerdmans, 2009), Marilyn Chandler McEntyre opposes "the commodified notion of happiness that links it so insistently with getting, spending, having, consuming and receiving the blessings of privilege without much reference to the burdens of payment."

Scripture (along with these happiness studies) call us toward contentment and relationships rather than consumption. TM

MARCH 2010 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPELS

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References are to the NIV unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

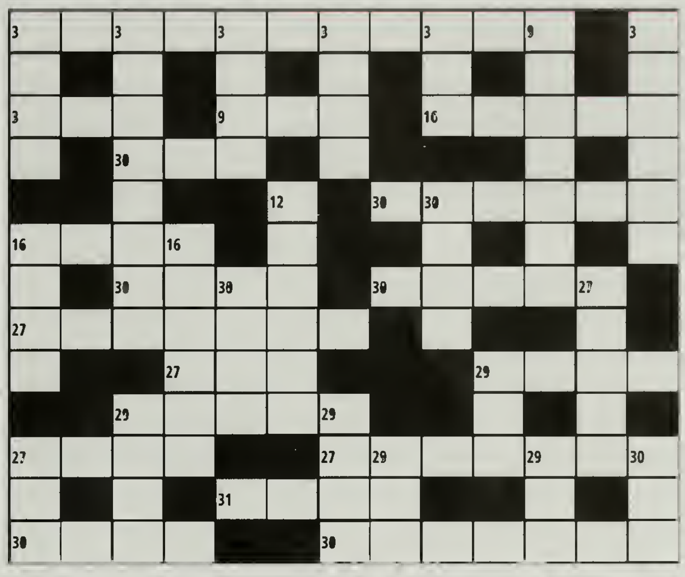
1. Animal name used interchangeably with the locust.
8. "The sluggard" is advised to consider the ways of this insect. Prov. 6.
9. King Solomon had this animal brought from the tropics to his kingdom. (singular) 1 Kings 10.
10. Babylon's people "all roar like young lions, they ____ like lion cubs." Jer. 51:38.
11. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an ___ , will give him a scorpion?" Lk. 11.
13. Kine or livestock.
15. Animal in the second plague of Egypt. (singular)
17. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Make a snake and put it up on a ___ ...'" Nu. 21
19. "The infant will play near the hole of the ____ ." Is. 11.
21. Nathan rebuked David and told him the story of a poor man who "had nothing except one little ___ ____ he had bought." (2 words)
22. "The fish in the Nile will ___ , and the river will stink." Ex. 7.
23. Mephibosheth said to David, "since I am lame ... I will have my donkey saddled and will ___ on it, so I can go with the king." 2 Sam. 19:26.
24. Many people kept flocks and ___ of sheep and cattle.
26. This unclean bird listed in the King James Version is translated as the white owl in the NIV. Lev. 11.
27. Jeremiah asks whether this animal can change its spots.
31. In Revelation 4–6, there were this number of living creatures around the throne.
32. This man kept flocks while his brother worked the soil.
33. "Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild ____ " when he chased Abner in battle and was killed. 2 Sam. 2:18.

DOWN

1. "... the leopard will lie down with the ___." Is. 11.
2. "Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street, like ____ caught in a net." Is. 51:20.
3. "My lover is like a gazelle or young ___ ." SS 2:9.
4. Beasts of burden.
5. Jesus cast out the demons which then entered this animal. (singular) Mk. 5.
6. This animal marked when Peter would disown Christ.
7. "I am sending you out like lambs among ____ ."
12. Psalms recounts Egypt's plagues: "Their land ____ with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers." Ps. 105.
14. This shepherd-prophet of Tekoa said the Lord took him from tending his flock in order to prophesy to Israel.
15. David asks Saul, "Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A ___ ? May the Lord be our judge ..." 1 Sam. 24.
16. Aaron crafted a ____ calf idol for the Israelites.
18. "A lion has come out of his ____ ; a destroyer of nations has set out." Jer. 4:7.
20. Another name for viper. Is 59:5.
23. "Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and ___ them open." Hos. 13.
24. KJV of rabbit.
25. Psalm 58 condemns the wicked rulers, and they will vanish, "Like a ___ melting away as it moves along."

Beasts of the Bible

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



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26. On the fifth day "God created the great creatures of the ___ ... with which the water teems ..."
28. Scientists divide God's earth into epochs, periods and this current time, known as the Cenozoic ___ . (singular)
29. God said, "Let man rule over ___ the living creatures."
30. Naphtali is compared to "a _____ set free that bears beautiful fawns." Gen. 49.

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FROM THE EDITOR

What is a radical yea-sayer?

Everett J. Thomas

Lost in the debate around Goshen (Ind.) College's decision to play the national anthem before sporting events (see page 43) was an even more significant change: president Jim Brenneman's call for Mennonites to be "radical yea-sayers" alongside our tradition of "radical nay-saying."

In an address on Jan. 20, Brenneman cited early Anabaptists as the source of the expectation that Mennonites would say no more often than yes.

"They said no to the fundamental religious and civil order of the time," Brenneman said. "They rejected the church-state union, which had dominated Christianity for some 1,000 years. They championed human freedom and the separation of church and state. ... These early Mennonites/Anabaptists were also 'idealists' and 'perfectionists' for whom the word compromise was considered sinful."

The problem with Brenneman's message is that few of us in the church are nay-sayers anymore. That leaves the call to be yea-sayers a moot point since we are already so acculturated.

On what societal issues shall we say yes, and on what issues should we say no?

This call to be radical yea-sayers also begs a question: On what societal issues shall we say yes, and on what issues should we say no?

Some of us think we should say yes to the new national health-care program. Some of us think we should say no. Those on each side of the divide may think their convictions are rooted in Anabaptist tradition and theology, making them "radical."

This lack of consensus about when to say yes and when to say no leaves us confused. Several years ago I had an experience as a member of the Goshen City Council that illustrates this confusion:

I enrolled in a 12-week Citizens' Academy course sponsored by the Goshen Police Department because I am the liaison between the council and the department.

I was impressed with the excellent level of training and deliberate care given to departmental policies—especially the city's continuum of force policy. But I noticed a gap in the continuum that led too quickly to the use of deadly force. After using pepper spray or a baton to subdue a suspect, the police officer's only option was his gun.

Because the city had no money for Tasers, I started a fund-raising campaign to purchase them. Within a year, each officer began carrying a Taser. Studies have shown that both law enforcement officials and suspects are less likely to be injured when Tasers are used instead of the other options in the continuum of force.

It was not until I heard the phrase "radical yea-sayer" that I thought of this effort to change our city's policy. But some Mennonite sisters and brothers in the community were displeased with my efforts. The reason: My involvement made me complicit in a system that considers violence justifiable.

But I saw the change as one that grows out of our roots: care for the physical well-being of people around us. In one sense, it was also a form of nay-saying: We do not want our police officers shooting people.

Perhaps the best we can do is examine our personal intersections with the culture in which we live. When we find ourselves supporting or opposing some element of public policy, are we doing so out of our convictions as disciples of Christ? If not, then we are compromising our beliefs. The early Anabaptists would have called such compromise sin.—*ejt*

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free to serve

Esther Vazquez has found freedom in Jesus Christ to serve as a Mennonite pastor.

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INSIDE:
- Special section on Mennonite retirement communities
- Remembering the forgotten
- Living the gospel in Colombia
- Yoder books keep coming
- Editorial: Comments worth printing

MHS
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Mennonite Health Services

Advancing God's Work of Healing and Hope

MHS Alliance has been serving the church for a long time, but under different names.

In 1988 Mennonite Mental Health Services, founded in the 1950s, became Mennonite Health Services. It expanded its mission to include church-related health and human service providers in addition to mental health organizations.

By 1994 MHS Alliance began relating directly to four sponsoring denominations: General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren, and Brethren in Christ. Since then, covenant relationships have been established with our denominational partners, strengthening these ministries through shared mission, services, and expertise.

Today, MHS Alliance provides leadership and support for 70 different member organizations, including 45 retirement communities, 11 mental health institutions, and 11 agencies serving those with developmental disabilities.

MHS Alliance carries out its mission to "strengthen and extend Anabaptist health and human services ministries" by:

- ◆ Administering programs such as Mennonite Health Assembly and the Values-Based Leadership Program.
- ◆ Providing consultation services (to members and other nonprofits) related to board governance, executive recruitment, organizational management, and faith-based identity.
- ◆ Facilitating the sharing of "promising practices" among member organizations and enabling supportive, meaningful networking among professional practitioners.

For more information or to engage the services of MHS Alliance, call 800-611-4007, e-mail info@mhsonline.org, or write MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main Street, Suite I, Goshen, Indiana 46526.

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ON THE COVER: Photo by Everett J. Thomas

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The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

From MMA to Everence

I am saddened by Mennonite Church USA institutions trying to distance themselves from our traditional identity. "Mennonite" and "Anabaptist" are brands—if you will—that are riding high in our land. Prophets in the "Emergent Church" movements are articulating Anabaptist theology prominently. Theologians are greatly influenced by our theology. Why does Mennonite Mutual Aid need to run from that identity ("MMA's New Name: Everence" May)? Dropping the "Mennonite" name will indeed contribute much to dropping the theology. And "mutual aid" is certainly not an "in" concept for an investment bank/insurance company. We'll have to get rid of that—it marks us as different. Why, such concepts are totally out of place on Wall Street.

"Everence?" Spell-check doesn't like it. Or is it an acronym? For what?

An unapologetic Mennonite. *—Maynard Shirk, Conestoga, Pa.*

Larry Miller responds

With our name change, MMA is not moving away from our Mennonite identity or relationship to the church. We recently added "A ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches" to our materials to communicate our mission.

MMA serves over 20 Anabaptist and related denominations. The Mennonite Brethren Church, Missionary Church, Conservative Mennonite Conference, and Brethren in Christ Church, with Mennonite Church USA, are represented on our board. We've served some of the churches for decades. Now we have an opportunity to reflect their long-standing involvement within our organization.

Everence represents our relationship to the church, and our new logo represents our Anabaptist community and its mutual aid values. Our vision is to help people and organizations integrate their financial decisions with their faith values.*—Larry Miller, MMA president and CEO*

Veiled and free

I read with interest "Veiled and Free" (April). I would like to share my perspectives on this issue. I practice the wearing of the veil. I admit it is not always easy to be different. So why don't I change? First of all, I feel I would be in violation of the teaching in 1 Corinthians 11. Second, it is a symbol of Christ as the head of man and man as head of the woman. Since my husband prefers his wife be veiled, I would be in direct opposition to his position as my head. These are my convictions. I do not condemn anyone who feels differently.*—Elsie Pennington, Lancaster, Pa.*

Learning to fly

I would like to say a big thank you to Mayeken Kehr for her superb article "Learning to Fly" (April). Her testimony shows a lot of good spiritual growth and understanding and is such an encouragement to all of us who want to see the Lord at work in the lives of our young people. In this case a college senior from Bethel College in North Newton, Kan. God bless her, and may she go on to use her talents to spread the gospel as the Lord leads.*—Betty Denlinger, Lititz, Pa.*

Address core issues of abortion

Regarding Cora Askren's letter "Where is the Outrage?" (April): My experiences as a registered nurse, then a pastor and now as a marriage and family therapist have often led me to discuss abortion with my husband, Lyn, and the many resulting opinions and questions. We have recognized that the issue is not really abortion but, as Cora articulates, Why are there unwanted pregnancies? When will that issue be faced with an intent to make a difference?

Cora goes on to talk about how the cost has been one-sided—the mother. I listen to children speak of the pain of not knowing a birth father or describing a birth father as only a "sperm donor." As a therapist, I challenge my clients to look at and address the core issue if they want to be successful in becoming healthy. As a body that practices saying we believe in justice for all, can we find the courage to address the abortion issue from a broader perspective than waving flags about abortion? Let's look at the core issues regarding abortion. Only then will our work be change-making. Thank you, Cora, for speaking out.—*Jeanie Hershey, Payette, Idaho*

Never assume God's help

Thank you for the splendid article on United Revival Mennonite Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. ("Decade-Long Church Building Project Comes to a Close," April). It was exciting to read of the resolution of relationships, the process by which this fine congregation was able to finish its building project with the help of Mennonite Mutual Aid and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). I was disappointed that not once was the miraculous intervention of God in this church mentioned. That church depends on God's Spirit. I am sure God's help was assumed, but that assumption should never be made without openly giving honor to God.—*Andrew Leatherman, Coatesville, Pa.*

Secular press leads against war

Thanks for the April editorial "At Peace With War." Everett Thomas' description of Mennonite Church USA is alarmingly true. While the historic peace churches are all but silent, the secular press (*The Nation*, *The New Yorker* and alternative media such as DemocracyNow.org) carry the leadership roles in alerting us to and lamenting the permanent war thinking that pervades the United States.—*Phyllis Stutzman, Goshen, Ind.*

At peace with more than war

Thank you for the April editorial, "At Peace with War." I plead guilty. I also lament my peace with capital punishment and with the physical and especially the psychological violence in the workplace, school, church and home. Certainly we must use our influence (speak, write, vote) to end the killing in Iraq, Afghanistan as well as the violence at home.

At the same time let's examine our motivation, our underpinnings, to make sure that we are positing and worshipping a compassionate, nonviolent God who affirms life (not death) and loves all creation, even enemies. Then perhaps we'll be better equipped to do the same.—*John Asa Hertzler, Edinburg, Va.*

Positive witness against war

Thanks to Everett Thomas for expressing our silent anxiety in the "At Peace With War"editorial (April). The peace movement no longer bombards editors with protest letters or promotes big, public, end-the-war prayer vigils or caravans to Washington to surround the Pentagon again. What else can be done to not be at peace with war?

There is a traditional, positive witness opportunity for conscientious objectors to war of all ages. It may seem scary, but many find it almost routine. It involves redirection of income-tax assessments used for killing and refugee-making to ministries meeting human need. Redirection of that part of our income taxes used for past and present wars (48 percent) or redirec-

(continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

We are honored to publish the article about Esther Vazquez as our cover story (page 12). This courageous woman—who dropped out of high school and fell victim to an abusive first husband—is now helping lead a third church plant in the Dallas area. Esther was willing to share her story in case it would be a blessing and help others.

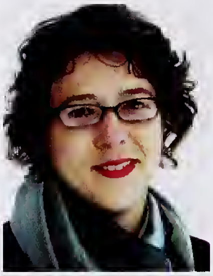
In this issue we also have a special theme section (pages 16-29) focusing on life in Mennonite retirement communities. We believe many readers will find this focus especially interesting, since 60 percent of those who subscribe to *The Mennonite* are over the age of 65.

The news section includes several exclusive stories, such as Jordan Zickafoose's work with sex offenders (page 45) and Anna Groff's report about the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience (PULSE) on page 50.

In Mediaculture, associate editor Gordon Houser takes a look at some of the 10 new books on John Howard Yoder and his theology (page 59). Groff's editorial reports on a new way our work provides a forum for the voices in Mennonite Church USA: through Facebook and Twitter (page 64).

The crossword puzzle (page 61) continues as a popular attraction. At the request of one puzzler, we now run the answers to the current puzzle on another page in the same issue. If you get stuck with the June puzzle, see page 56. —*Editor*

The month with wings



Sara Dick is associate pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

June is the Month with Wings," writes world traveler Vivian Swift. She describes June as the month when anything can happen—a month characterized by freedom and possibility, a month with wings.

As a child, I often daydreamed about flying while watching birds rise and swoop through the trees around my house. Observing their aerial acrobatics, I longed to be as free as those birds seemed to be.

And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest" (Psalm 55:6-8).

Adding his voice to the Psalmist's, Paul writes often of "the freedom we have in Christ Jesus." In his letters to the young churches he tended, Paul reminds believers that this wasn't freedom by the world's definition but by a new definition: freedom to learn and grow in Christ and to give oneself entirely to loving and serving God.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set you free from the law of sin and of
death (Romans 8:2).

Donald Spoto writes, "Conversion is a response to God, who invites us to a state of complete freedom, away from everything that is hostile to God's goodness and mercy."

Racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, elitism and ageism are forces hostile to God's goodness and mercy. Jesus invites and even commands us to take off these chains of prejudice that bind us to the suffering and iniquity of this world. Paul's way of saying this to the Galatians is that we who have put on the clothes of Christ are freed from judging the other labels we wear: slave or free, male and female, American or Mexican or Iranian or … (You may add here the labels you know to be troublesome in your community).

Conformity to Christ and nonconformity to the world are the marks of someone who follows Jesus—and who is free.

Jesus' alternative understanding of freedom comes through in our Mennonite description of discipleship. Conformity to Christ and nonconformity to the world are the marks of someone who follows Jesus—and who is free.

Teenagers (or adults) who have tried to alter their looks to magazine-cover standards can tell you how life-sapping it can be to conform to the world. Anyone who has racked up a mountain of debt to buy the latest gizmos or who has tried to deny death can attest to the same. The truth of God's presence and love sets us free from our society's illusions and bigotry to be fully and beautifully the people God created us to be.

Of course, bondage isn't only spiritual and internal; it can also be physical and external. Many communities celebrate Juneteenth, offering a historical view on freedom on our American landscape.

Juneteenth looks back to June 19, 1865, when slaves in Texas first heard they were free—more than two years after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Now, almost 150 years later, African-Americans and others join to celebrate freedom and remember the sufferings of slavery so many endured in the early days of this nation.

Last summer, the delegates at the Mennonite Church USA convention in Columbus, Ohio, adopted a statement against human trafficking to educate Mennonite churches and offer healing and liberation to those who have been enslaved for sex or labor. Still today, many people in our communities and around the world are not free to worship, work and live where they wish. The message of God's liberating power and love is still needed in all these places.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of
your wings (Psalm 36:7).

Here God's wings protect those who seek refuge. Both the protection and the freedom of God's wings are needed by us and our neighbors, and both protection and freedom are proclaimed by our winged faith. Too many children and adults experience pain and worry that bind them and keep them from experiencing a free life.

I wonder if the most perfectly June moment for children might be that first, surprising day of summer vacation: nothing to do but play. As I write this, I'm only a few days away from a sabbatical, and a professor I know tells me the first day is the best day, because everything is still possible.

Hooray for the winged freedom of June. TM

Breakfast at the window on a cloudy day

by Mary E. O'Dell

Eat the charred tag-end of bread
or a greeny peach
not sweet enough to dribble down your chin—

still, a certain forthrightness
in the crunch
the bitter edge.

Hunger makes the palate fresh to the pleasure
of imperfect things.
The sparse facts of our lives—and they are

separate from the truth—could merely be
that we are born in a certain wrinkle of earth,
seed cast into a ditch,

rained upon and risen green and straight in the stalk,
producing nuggets someday crushed
by the teeth of children we will not know,

nuggets burst and hearty of flavor
that bleeds through the fresh bone and flesh,
making it strong.

Or perhaps we are seeds of a fruit consumed
by grackles,
passing as honesty through gullet and gut

emerging sweet or acrid,
whatever is true in the way of the grackle,
and sinking into orchard earth.

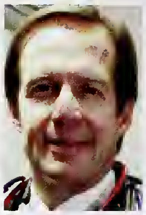
And if we see ourselves as grain
thrust up and winnowed, ground into bread
or fruit dropping heavy and green

from a dying tree, perhaps we will come to surrender
with arms flung open,
faces raised to the sky of cloud and falling rain.

Mary E. O'Dell lives in Middletown, Ky.

Goshen alumnus one of most influential people

GOSHEN, Ind.—*Time* magazine has announced that Goshen Center for Cancer Care medical director Douglas Schwartzentruber, a 1978 Goshen College alumnus, has been named to the magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world, the "2010 *Time* 100."



Schwartzentruber has been the lead author and principal investigator of a breakthrough study on the use of a vaccine in treating skin cancer. The clinical trial was one of the first studies to prove vaccines might have a medical benefit against cancer. Schwartzentruber brought the clinical trial from the National Cancer Institute to Goshen Center for Cancer Care almost seven years ago, when he accepted the medical director position in his hometown. According to a news release, the Center is in the planning stages for the next clinical study. Results of the initial trial have been submitted and are currently being reviewed for publication. *—Goshen College*

Paetkau ends term

WATERLOO, Ontario—President Henry Paetkau will conclude his term of service at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, in June 2011. Paetkau began his service in January 2003, went through a presidential review in late 2005, and was reappointed for a second term through June 2011. Paetkau arrived in the midst of a major building project that saw the residential community grow by some 50 percent. The academic program has also been expanded in a number of areas since then with the appointment of several new faculty, the establishment of a bachelor's degree in peace and conflict studies, and the approval of a conjoint Master of Theological Studies degree with the University of Waterloo.*—Conrad Grebel University College*

Group questions Elkhart, Ind., building project

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—A group of Mennonite Church USA members are protesting the Mennonite Church USA Elkhart, Ind., building project and how this project may affect the denomination's future. Spark Renewal is the group's name, and their Web site is www.sparkrenewal.org.

"Because of the depth of unresolved questions about the wisdom of building a large new office building in Elkhart at this time," says the group's Web site, "we are asking Mennonite Church USA to put the planned building project on temporary hold, not break ground in June, as planned, and initiate a thorough review of the process, including a broad invitation for public comment and suggestion of alternatives."

Sarah Thompson and Nekeisha Alexis-Baker, both of Elkhart, described the group's concerns on May 4: What is missional about the building? How do church members feel about the building as an identity piece? How do young adults feel about the building and its location? How does the building affect the denomination's antiracism goal? How does the building affect Elkhart? How have the plans changed, or not changed, due to the economic recession?

Leanne Farmwald, director of communications for Mennonite Church USA, responded to the questions on May 12.

"All these questions were considered at various points along the way by Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and the Mennonite Mission Network board," Farmwald said. "Though we weren't able to connect with everyone we would have liked to, discussions were informed by opinions gathered from a wide variety of individuals across the church.

"The decision to move ahead with a building in Elkhart was not because this is a perfect solution to the many issues that Mennonite Church USA needs to address. It was a decision made in good faith given the goals, information and resources available at the time," Farmwald said.*—Anna Groff*

Marion Ward

WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER!
www.fcnl.org

First conference to challenge robotic war

Participants in the first-ever Challenging Robotic Warfare & Social Control conference hold images of Picasso's Guernica (representing hundreds of civilians killed in U.S. drone strikes) outside Boeing's military drone offices in Bingen, Wash., on April 19. The conference was initiated by the new Alliance to Resist Robotic Warfare & Society network formed by the late Gene Stoltzfus and others at the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009. *—ARROWS*

The Mennonite awarded

GOSHEN, Ind.—*The Mennonite* received awards for poetry, original reporting, cover design and a letter to the editor at the May 6-8 Associated Church Press convention in Washington. The poem "Heavens" by Jesse Nathan (May 5, 2009) took top honors in its category. A letter to the editor from Harvey Chupp, Shipshewana, Ind., also received a top award for its plaintive and poignant criticism of the Internet and the loss of print magazines (May 5, 2009). Assistant editor

Annette Brill Bergstresser

Praying for immigrants

Responding to a call for a vigil on May 1, participants gathered at the North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church to pray. From left: Kendel Martin, Dean Linsenmeyer, Bek Lindsenmeyer and Gilberto Perez.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Anna Groff received honorable mention for "Mennonite Churches Decide If and How to Minister to Convicted Sex Offenders" (April 21, 2009). Designer Dee Birkey also received an honorable mention for her Dec. 15, 2009, cover. —*Everett J. Thomas*

Rempel new conference minister for WDC

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Clarence E. Rempel of Newton, Kan., has accepted the position of conference minister for Western District Conference. Rempel will succeed Dorothy Nickel Friesen, who gave notice last fall of her plans to retire in July. Rempel will be commissioned as the new conference minister July 11 at the annual WDC assembly in Waxahachie, Texas. Currently working alongside Friesen as the WDC's associate conference minister for churches in Kansas and Nebraska, in his new role Rempel will give overall leadership to one of the largest area conferences in Mennonite Church USA. Ordained Jan. , 1980, Rempel led Mennonite congregations for 32 years. Rempel will begin the new role on July 1.—*June Galle Krehbiel*

Bethel receives grant

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.,—The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla., has awarded Bethel College, North Newton, a $725,000 challenge grant for renovation of Old Science Hall into the Academic Center. To receive the grant, Bethel must raise an additional $921,424 by April 2011. The Old Science Hall, constructed in 1925, is the second oldest building on campus after the Administration Building.—*Bethel College*

Menno Simons College gets permanent home

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—For the first time in its 20-year history, Menno Simons College has found a permanent home. Through a significant legacy gift from the David and Katherine Friesen Family Foundation, MSC has purchased the first two floors of 520 Portage Avenue—the building where it has leased space since 2005. MSC is a college of Canadian Mennonite University and is affiliated with and located adjacent to the campus of the University of Winnipeg. MSC plans to renovate the 16,500-square-foot area beginning May 2011. Since its inception in 1990, MSC had been leasing available space at the University of Winnipeg.—*Menno Simons College*

Buller retires as Third Way Media director

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Burton Buller, director of Third Way Media, Harrisonburg, since 1999, has announced his retirement effective June 30.

Buller will continue to host the Shaping Families radio program on a volunteer basis and work as an independent contractor to complete a new documentary exploring peace traditions in both the Christian and Muslim faiths in cooperation with Third Way Media and Odyssey Networks. Program manager Sheri Hartzler and business manager Lowell Hertzler have been named interim co-directors of Third Way media.

During Buller's 11-year tenure, the Third Way Media team (formerly Mennonite Media) has produced nine full length documentaries.—*Third Way Media*

Hesston students conduct Earth Day projects

HESSTON, Kan.—Students in Nelson Kilmer's College Physics II class at Hesston College presented their class projects during a campus Earth Day celebration April 29. Kilmer's students tested photovoltaic solar collectors and explored methods of connecting home systems to the power grid.

Students completed feasibility studies and cost analysis for faculty members Bob and Lorna Harder and President Howard and Tami Keim. The Harders are considering installing a system to power their rural home with the goal of generating nearly all the power they consume. One group evaluated four proposals that Kilmer's son Ron, a Phoenix resident, is considering for his home.—*Hesston College*

Children learn through play, not through testing

Our current educational approach—and the testing that is driving it—is completely at odds with what scientists understand about how children develop during the elementary school years and has led to a curriculum that is strangling children and teachers alike.

Saying the alphabet does not particularly help children learn to read. But having extended and complex conversations during toddlerhood does. Simply put, what children need to do in elementary school is not to cram for high school or college but to develop ways of thinking and behaving that lead to valuable knowledge and skills later on.

By age 12, or the time they leave elementary school, children should be able to read a chapter book, write a story and a compelling essay; know how to add, subtract, divide and multiply numbers; detect patterns in complex phenomena; use evidence to support an opinion; be part of a group of people who are not their family; and engage in an exchange of ideas in conversation. If all elementary school students mastered these abilities, they would be prepared to learn almost anything in high school and college.

Imagine, for instance, a third-grade classroom free of the laundry list of goals harnessing our teachers and students and was devoted instead to just a few narrowly defined and focused goals.

In this classroom, children would spend two hours each day hearing stories read aloud, reading aloud themselves, telling stories to one another and reading on their own. After all, the first step to literacy is simply being immersed, through conversation and storytelling, in a reading environment; the second is to read a lot and often. A school day where every child is given ample opportunities to read and discuss books would give teachers more time to help those students who need more instruction in order to become good readers.

Children would also spend an hour a day writing things that have actual meaning to them—stories, newspaper articles, captions for cartoons, letters to one another. People write best when they use writing to think and communicate rather than to get a good grade.

In our theoretical classroom, children would also spend a short period of time each day practicing computation—adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once children are proficient in those basics they would be free to turn to other activities that are equally essential for math and science: devising original experiments, observing the natural world and counting things, whether they be words, events or people.

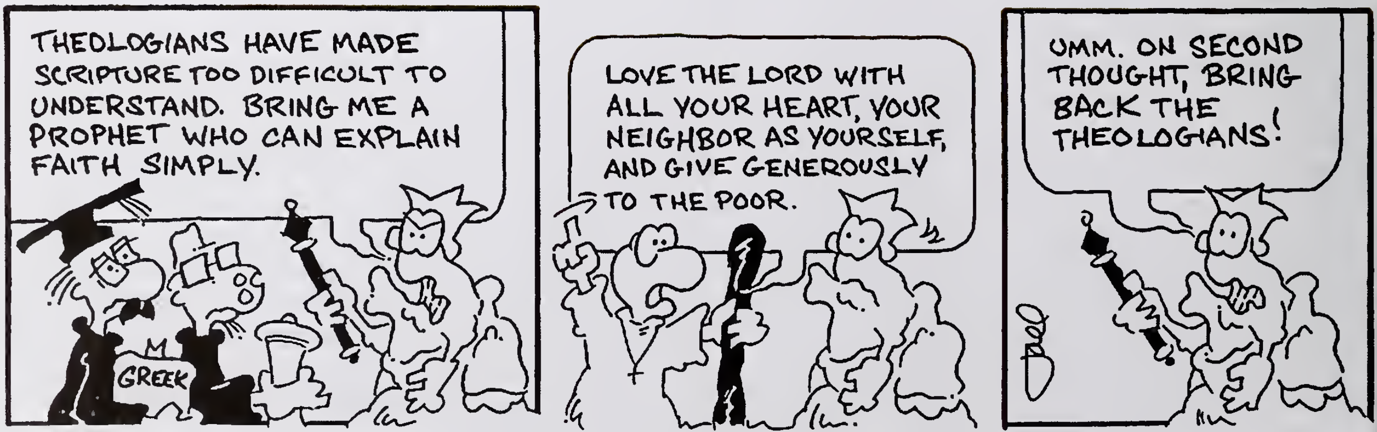
What they shouldn't do is spend tedious hours learning isolated mathematical formulas or memorizing sheets of science facts that are unlikely to matter much in the long run. Scientists know that children learn best by putting experiences together in new ways. They construct knowledge; they don't swallow it.

During the school day, there should be extended time for play. Research has shown unequivocally that children learn best when they are interested in the material or activity they are learning. Play—from building contraptions to enacting stories to inventing games—can allow children to satisfy their curiosity about the things that interest them in their own way.

A classroom like this would provide lots of time for children to learn to collaborate with one another, a skill easily as important as math or reading. It takes time and guidance to learn how to get along, to listen to one another and to cooperate.—*Susan Engel in* The New York Times

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


THEOLOGIANS HAVE MADE SCRIPTURE TOO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. BRING ME A PROPHET WHO CAN EXPLAIN FAITH SIMPLY.
GREEK
LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF, AND GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE POOR.
UMM. ON SECOND THOUGHT, BRING BACK THE THEOLOGIANS!
Joel

> **“They [terrorists] can’t claim that their suicide bombings are martyrdom operations and that they become the heroes of the Muslim Umma [global brotherhood]. No, they become heroes of hellfire, and they are leading toward hellfire. There is no place for any martyrdom, and their act is never, ever to be considered jihad.”**—*Tahir ul-Qadri, a London-based Pakistani Muslim scholar in a fatwa (religious ruling) against terrorism and suicide bombing. (Source: Al Jazeera)*

Faith leaders decry ‘anti-immigrant’ immigration law

Religious leaders planned legal action and civil disobedience after Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed a bill into law April 23 they believe is “anti-immigrant” and will foster racial profiling.

The National Coalition of Latino Clergy & Christian Leaders is developing a suit against the law that allows law enforcement agencies to detain people who cannot immediately prove their U.S. citizenship.—*Religion News Service*

With her careers as veterinarian, astronaut and U.S. president behind her, Barbie (above) has at last found her true calling: as a second-career Episcopal priest. The 11.5-inch-tall fictional graduate of Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif., has donned a cassock and surplice and is rector at St. Barbara’s-by-the-Sea in (where else?) Malibu, Calif.
—*Religion News Service*

Fascism may be coming, says Noam Chomsky

Noam Chomsky, the leading leftwing intellectual, warned in April that fascism may be coming to the United States.

“I’m just old enough to have heard a number of Hitler’s speeches on the radio,” he said, “and I have a memory of the texture and the tone of the cheering mobs, and I have the dread sense of the dark clouds of fascism gathering” here at home.

Chomsky was speaking to more than 1,000 people at the Orpheum Theatre in Madison, Wis., where he received the University of Wisconsin’s A.E. Havens Center’s award for lifetime contribution to critical scholarship.

“The level of anger and fear is like nothing I can compare in my lifetime,” he said.—*The Progressive*

The heat goes on

March was the warmest on record worldwide, based on records dating back to 1880, scientists reported April 15. The average land and ocean surface temperature for the month was 56.3 degrees Fahrenheit (13.5 degrees Celsius), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported. That was 1.39 degrees F (0.77 C) above the average for the month over the 20th century. Climate researchers have been reporting rising global temperatures due to rising levels of carbon dioxide and as other gases in the atmosphere trap heat instead of allowing it to escape into space.—*Associated Press*

Happiness through reading

A recent study of 45,000 adults linked reading the newspaper to higher levels of happiness, while watching lots of TV correlated with lower happiness levels, according to Consumer Reports on Health.—*The Marketplace*

Abortion and health care

The U.S. abortion rate—20.8 per 1,000 women—is the highest in the developed world. In Canada and Western Europe, women have legal access to abortion but also have access to health care—the key reason abortion rates there are lower than in the United States. (The abortion rate is 7.8 per 1,000 women in Germany, 14.3 in Denmark, 15.2 in Canada.)—*The Christian Century*

4 reasons to not use plastic water bottles

1. 90 percent of plastic water bottles don’t get recycled and end up in landfills.
2. 1.5 million barrels of oil are used to produce the bottles [each year], and much more is required in shipping.
3. Tap water is held to higher quality standards by the EPA than bottled water.
4. Two gallons of water is used to purify every gallon of bottled water.—*Spirituality & Health*

Free to serve

by Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz

Esther Vazquez has served as pastor in the Mennonite church for more than 12 years. If we left it at that and assumed that her story is similar to that of any other Mennonite pastor, we would not only fail to understand the unique gifts she gives us today but what Mennonite Church USA can and maybe will look like in the future.

Esther Vazquez has found freedom in Jesus Christ to serve as a Mennonite pastor.

Esther is a fourth-generation Mexican-American living and serving in and around Dallas. With Pentecostal roots in her family, her father-in-law decided to plant a General Conference Mennonite Church congregation, which she joined. This is a perfect example of the hybrid found in the Latina Mennonite church: holding space for Pentecostal beliefs and experiences yet sharing the name Mennonite as part of its identity.

Once she embraced the title of Mennonite, she journeyed out to find other women outside her congregation, Caucasian women who through a Bible study taught her Anabaptist beliefs.

While in the ministry she has served on the boards of The Mennonite, Inc., and Western District Conference, on the Constituency Leaders Council, as co-moderator/secretary for the Mid-Texas Convention, as board member/treasurer for the Learning Leadership Institute, as director of women's ministry for the Texas Mennonite Convention, as a participant in the Dallas-area church plant council and, most importantly to her, as pastor of three church plants, two of which are now full-fledged churches.

The area of possible contention in Esther as she explored her new Anabaptist beliefs 12 years ago was with the intersection between Esther's Pentecostal experience—gifts of the Holy Spirit/speaking in tongues—and Mennonites' views of the work of the Holy Spirit. This theological point, which depended greatly on these Caucasian women's presentation, could either have ended Esther's relationship with the Mennonite church or empowered her to be present to God's work in her life and find acceptance of her full spiritual expression within a relatively conservative (among Anglos) Mennonite community. She did find acceptance, and we are grateful.

In addition to her family's faith history, Esther connects with the common "Latina story" that informs the areas of Anabaptist theology (nonviolence/peace and anticlericalism/priesthood of all) that she emphasizes for her community. The Latina story, as I'm calling it, includes two themes: the acceptance of force in the family nucleus and the power of hierarchy. She has found these to be the core of the Anabaptist message that has touched the lives of countless Roman Catholic Latinos as well as Protestant Latinos in her ministry. Latinos have integrated an element of their culture to their faith that could bring some needed balance to the majority Mennonite expression of faith.

Esther came to Christ in the Pentecostal church as a young bride continually beaten by her then husband (see page 15). Enough said, right? Fortunately she found peace through Jesucristo, but the message she received from church leaders did not reflect the kind of God she wanted to worship. She was told that God would save her and that she must tolerate her suffering as faithfulness to God, for God would not stand by her if she left her husband. Esther could not understand how her God would tolerate this, and so for a time she left God.

Since coming to a peace church, she has never heard anyone call this type of suffering surrender to God. Today she is a strong advocate for women, men and children against domestic violence, which is prevalent among Latinos. She has moved away from a martyr's theology to a freedom from having to experience violence in any form, and from this new place speaks against it.

> The message she received from church leaders did not reflect the kind of God she wanted to worship.

Views on the role of hierarchy within society and church have changed for both Mennonites and Latinos in history. One area they both have in common is that their historical responses come from a relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Hierarchy can be created because of race, gender, financial status, education, ministerial experience or historical precedent.

Esther's first Mennonite pastorate was as a co-pastor with two Caucasian women. They were both working on post-graduate degrees and held a place of superiority in Esther's mind. According to the Mennonite pay system, these more educated women received more money for the same work Esther was doing. Esther only had a G.E.D. and later pursued Bible and seminary training. At this time, though, she cringed with embarrassment when it was her time to preach in front of these well-educated women with whom she served. At one point, one of the women asked that the pay that was above Esther's be taken and divided among both women so that they had equal pay, which meant Esther was paid more and the other woman less. This lesson in humility and equality resulted in a transformation in Esther

Esther, left, talks with the music-worship team at the House of Healing Mennonite Church in Dallas. This photo was taken on Oct. 26, 2008, the first day the congregation worshipped in their new building. Photo by Everett J. Thomas

Fiesta is a form of cultural resistance.

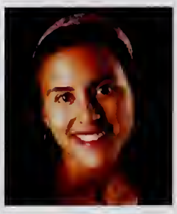
and her ministry that is felt to this day. Not only was she empowered and lifted out of the inferiority she had nestled in but she saw their intentional work in helping her find her voice, grow to be more of a servant as God had called her and later confront the hierarchy she saw in her other church planting roles.

This first church ultimately closed, but Esther's work continued in other church plants. I mentioned the Anabaptist value of being separate from the world and that Latinos carry cultural baggage we need to leave behind. I asked if she thought our hierarchy served us or if we should discard it. Her response was immediate: It is an obstacle to our witness. She gave an example of being reprimanded by another Dallas pastor for asking his church's musician to serve her church, though this would have in no way interfered with this musician's local church's commitments. The evidence of the hierarchy here is that this musician was this pastor's property to be used to his wishes, and he was below his authority.

At the conference level, Esther sees how money and hierarchy go hand in hand. Many Latino pastors will not speak up for themselves and their churches against what they perceive to be the power in the conference because their livelihood is connected to the conference. Predominately immigrant churches are naturally dependent on the church conference and need empowering to find their new voice in a society foreign to them and to feel comfortable without fearing repercussions from speaking of their experience in the denominational system. At the same time, since most Spanish-speaking pastors are first-generation immigrants, finding a way to break with deep-seated cultural hierarchy is almost impossible. It may be the second and/or third generations that are able to assimilate the Anabaptist values of the priesthood of all and, more importantly, the servant leadership that Esther embodies uniquely in Dallas.

During this interview, Esther spoke from a sermon she was preparing for the following Sunday that touched on a unique contribution Latinos have to offer the predominately Anglo and aging Mennonite church: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me ... to ... provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise" (Isaiah 61). It is in this celebration so characteristic of Latinos—their community and their worship—that the church is built up, freedom is proclaimed and the captives are released. Many Latino theologians in the United States speak of it in terms of "fiesta," as a theological anthropology. This is not a "party," as literally translated into English, but a celebration in which there is no distinction between religious and civil and where work and play are intermingled. It is in the spirit of receiving and responding instead of the autonomous values of the majority culture of doing and making. In other words, fiesta is a form of cultural resistance.

Considering Anglo Mennonite culture's tendency to value work and service, I wonder how these two communities will learn to value their journey together. That may be left to my children's generation. Then it will no longer be subject-object service work, but both groups will find value in work and play (both being understood as fiesta). Then we can rest and wait as well as we dig holes and prepare meals together.



Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz is a member of San Antonio Mennonite Church. See also page 58.

From left, the music-worship team and Esther and José during worship at the House of Healing Mennonite Church in Dallas. Photo by Everett J. Thomas

Esther's house of healing

"When I was in my first marriage," Esther Vazquez said on April 24, "I attempted to get help from the church. A woman would come to my house and see me badly beaten, and I would say, 'Does God want this for me?' She said, 'Your faith will save him.' "

"So when I left the relationship, I thought I left God," she said. "We're told to carry the cross, and we interpret the abuse as our cross. Many women cannot disclose the abuse because their husbands are leaders."

But Esther had not left God when she left her abusive marriage. Today she is helping lead a third church plant in the Dallas area. Unlike the first two efforts, however, she has a partner in ministry this time. José Vazquez, her husband of three years and former leader in the Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference, works with her as the leadership team for the House of Healing Mennonite Church in Dallas (see photo above). The congregation started in 2005 as a house church.

"My background is reflected in my messages," Esther said. "I speak of a protecting God and a healing God, and that comes from where I was [in an abusive first marriage] and a need to share it."

House of Healing rents a building from a United Methodist church. Currently 147 people participate in congregational life, with a weekly attendance of about 80. The church has a large youth group, with 35 regular participants; the youth group is led by Esther's son Raymond Delgado and his wife, Paty.

"I asked the youth group to sit in the back of the church," Esther said, "because the group was so big; when they left the worship service for their Sunday school class, the church looked empty."

In addition to her son, Esther's other three children and eight of nine grandchildren also attend House of Healing (see photo below).

Esther's home church was Luz del Evangelio, a church that was planted in 1990. Her first church plant was an assignment that was in a three-woman team ministry at the Many Peoples Mennonite Church from 2001 to 2003. She mentored and assisted with Iglesia Menonita mi Redentor 2003-2005, which is a Nicaraguan congregation that is still open.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Esther Vazquez (in the middle of photo) with her children and grandchildren. Her four children and eight of her nine grandchildren attend House of Healing Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas, where she and José, her husband, are pastors. Photo provided

TM SPECIAL SECTION

MENNONITE HEALTH SERVICES ALLIANCE

"Help me, God. I want to die. Why don't you take me?" Annie aimlessly wanders through the Alzheimer's unit repeating this anguished cry over and over.

Remembering the forgotten

by Cheryl Paulovich

Listen to me …

[You] who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb;

Even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you.

I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.—Isaiah 46:3-4

What we can learn from Alzheimer's patients

I approach and greet her, pulling up a chair to be at her level and look into her eyes. I gently stroke her arm, telling her God loves her. She quickly responds that God doesn't answer her.

I recite the 23rd Psalm, and she joins in. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

She defiantly says, "I've tried that and it doesn't work. Oh, I want to die. I can't remember anything. I don't even know who I am."

Lightly caressing her shoulders—she says it feels good—I begin singing the Lord's Prayer. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Again she cries out, "God I want to die. Why don't you take me?" Then she prays, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" as she wanders off in her wheelchair to another corner of the room.

The nursing assistant looks at me and shrugs her shoulders, while other residents ignore her, absorbed in their own inner worlds. Louise bends over to pick up her imaginary little people off the floor and talk to them. Ruth carries on a monologue about her mother, while Lisa sings an extemporaneous song about what she is doing.

For a moment I stand in silence, acknowledging the yearnings of each person. I hold Annie in remembrance, praying a Psalm of lament: "O Lord, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence, let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry. For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; I am like those who have no help, like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from you. You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. … I am shut in so that I cannot escape" (Psalm 88:1-8). May your grace and peace be hers, Lord Jesus.

I have come as chaplain to the Alzheimer's unit for Bible study. I gather residents around the table, and together we sing the old hymns they love. Even though they may no longer recognize family members, the words of songs and Scripture never leave their hearts and minds. We talk about the love of Jesus and how he held the children in his arms and blessed them. I pray a blessing on each person with a hug and a kiss. "I love you."

Dementia of the Alzheimer's type is a progressive degeneration and loss of nerve cells in the brain's cortex that are associated with memory, learning and judgment. In 2008, the number of Americans affected by Alzheimer's disease was estimated at 5.2 million. It is projected that by 2050 the number will reach more than 16 million (Thibault and Morgan). As lifespan increases, the number of age-related illnesses also increases. Experts say nearly 50 percent of the population will develop dementia by age 85. It is becoming more difficult for families to manage care at home, and they look to long-term care facilities to provide for loved ones.

As Alzheimer's disease progresses, it increasingly incapacitates the patient until often, at death, the patient is unresponsive. How is pastoral care effectively administered to these people? What are the faith implications for someone who can no longer cognitively understand, pray or receive Communion? How is God known to them? What can Alzheimer's patients teach me about God's love?

In 2008, the number of Americans affected by Alzheimer's disease was estimated at 5.2 million. It is projected that by 2050 the number will reach more than 16 million.

Ministry of presence

The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective affirms that the Holy Spirit in an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective is the Spirit of God through which the world was created, who dwelled in Jesus Christ and is God's presence and power in the world. By the Holy Spirit, the love of God is poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5), and we experience new birth in Christ and participate in the body of Christ. Romans 8:26 declares that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Furthermore, nothing will separate us from the love of Christ—not hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword (Romans 8:35)—or, one might say, Alzheimer's disease. Paul re-emphasizes this a few verses later: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate ▶

us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

It would seem to follow that a ministry of presence, as a minister of Jesus Christ, is the most profound way to be the love of God to another that extends beyond thought and words.

> Their total dependency on others is perhaps the best metaphor of what our own lives in Christ ought to be—totally dependent on God.

Remembering the forgotten

While Alzheimer's patients are still aware enough of the losses they experience, as in the example of Annie, they increasingly become disoriented and disconnected from reality. Often the personality begins to change, and the person expresses verbal and/or physical violence toward loved ones. Family members find it extremely difficult when their loved one no longer recognizes them for who they are. A son told me he visits his mother only once every three months because she doesn't even know him, and it's better for both of them to not "be in each other's face."

When a person is no longer able to remember who they are, it is up to others to hold them in memory, keeping alive the songs, Scriptures and prayers that were once an anchor for them. Their total dependency on others is perhaps the best metaphor of what our own lives in Christ ought to be—totally dependent on God.

At the center of our faith is Christ's suffering. Huebner writes, "The church is often tempted to separate salvation from suffering, to see salvation as synonymous with overcoming suffering, with liberation. Memory loss teaches us otherwise. ... Our ability to imagine salvation for such a person requires understanding that our well-being rests in the hands of another who can change what we cannot" (*Vision*). Ultimately it is about how God remembers us.

Remembering as God remembers

"Can a woman forget her nursing child or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:15-16). This image of God's love as stronger than even a mother's is a reminder that God's remembering isn't about cognitive recall but about God's character. God creates, redeems and came to us as Jesus to live, suffer and die, rise and forgive.

Huebner says that remembering as God remembers is to remind us of our identity in Christ. "We are loved, we are accepted, we are gifted with grace, we are being healed, we are not forgotten. ... Death is not the ultimate enemy; being forgotten is" (*Vision*). The greatest gift we can give to one another is to be present, in death or in life, regardless of physical, mental or emotional condition. For it is only in Christ that we are found.

Congregational response

Health care for the aging is a missional call to Mennonite Church USA in the 21st century. Ministering God's love to those with dementia is a challenge we cannot ignore. Jane Marie Thibault boldly encourages congregations to assess who the care receivers and caregivers are, visit regularly, educate the congregation, offer respite, transportation, opportunities to worship, pastoral counseling and be advocates. In so doing, we will be remembering the forgotten among us. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). Above all, we must not forget to remember God's initiative of love toward us.

Cheryl Paulovich is chaplain at Glencroft Retirement Community in Glendale, Ariz., and a member of Trinity Mennonite Church.

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Becoming like family

by Heidi Martin

Three entities merge to form Living Branches, which serves residents and lets them serve in a variety of ways.

The lifesize apple tree in the lobby of Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Homes (SMH) offers more than breathtaking décor or a place to sit and converse with friends. The tree is a reminder of the past and a symbol of growth.

Built in 1917, SMH was surrounded by an apple orchard. Even then, the retirement community focused on service to others as the orchard provided food to the community, specifically during the Great Depression. SMH was not simply a retirement community but a place for canning, freezing and even butchering. It was as foundational to the town as the post office and bank.

The apple orchard no longer exists, but SMH is still a respectable monument. Combined with Dock Woods in nearby Lansdale and Dock Meadows in Hatfield, the homes are known as Living Branches. Today, Living Branches is recognized for strong roots, a solid trunk and blossoming branches of service within the retirement community and beyond.

Establishing roots: SMH, Dock Woods and Dock Meadows began as three separate retirement communities. With common Anabaptist affiliations and such close proximity, the three boards wondered if they might offer more to residents and employees if they joined together.

"We began asking, 'Are there ways we can do what we do better together rather than separate?'" says Ed Brubaker, President and CEO of Living Branches.

One of the key benefits focused on employees. The discussion centered on how Living Branches planned to hire employees and develop them into capable leaders.

"This was an opportunity to grow better together through effective training programs, leadership development and more expertise across the organization," Brubaker says.

A piece of employee development includes increasing training and development for members of the board. With a merge, one 15-member board could serve all three entities.

"This would free people to do other work in the conference," Brubaker says. "Franconia Conference is not a huge conference, but it has a lot of Conference Related Ministries."

Coupled with this discussion was one focused on using business consultants and other outside resources to increase the value of the organization.

It is not uncommon to see residents rocking babies at the children's center or students from Penn View Christian School volunteering with the residents.

Penn View Service Day students with residents. Photo provided

Dock Woods resident Harry Moore with a Christopher Dock student. Photo provided

An internal focus combined with the use of outside resources would optimize the organizations' financial resources.

The third, and greatest, key benefit involved the residents. "Affiliations or mergers focus on financial resources most of the time," Brubaker says. "We don't want to minimize that, but the bigger benefit was for our residents."

Not only would residents benefit from a highly trained staff but from a wider selection of services and programs. The Life-Long Learning Program is one example. Because of the nearness to Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, residents from Dock Woods participated in academic classes to continue learning. Classes ran for a six-week period and were taught by Christopher Dock's faculty. This is a difficult program to maintain for a single-site campus. However, with a larger population from multiple sites, the program is easier to maintain in the long run.

These conversations of key benefits continued to lead toward positive outcomes. "The conclusion was, Yes, we feel there is an opportunity here," Brubaker says. "There seemed to be enough synergies between the organizations that we thought we could improve services to our residents, employees and the greater community by coming together."

SMH, Dock Woods and Dock Meadows combined under the name of Living Branches on Nov. 24, 2008.

A solid trunk: The three campuses have much to offer residents and families.

Both SMH and Dock Woods are Continuing Care Retirement Communities. CCRCs consider all aspects of a resident's life: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social. This approach provides satisfaction and fulfillment to residents.

As part of a CCRC facility, SMH and Dock Woods offer three main levels of care. Cottages, villas and apartments provide independent residential living. Personal care provides meals and some assistance with daily living activities. As part of personal care, both facilities offer memory support units. The third level of care is nursing care, offered to patients who need continual medical attention.

"The nursing unit has received a five-star rating at the federal level and is known for its high level of care in the community," Brubaker says. "In this unit, there are strong, personal connections between staff and residents. They are like family."

Dock Meadows, the smallest of the three campuses, offers personal-care services. These residents also have access to nursing care as needed.

Living proof : Harry Moore moved with his wife to Dock Woods on Sept. 15, 2004. Harry received a doctorate, served in children's ministry, taught, pastored, lived in Austria and Switzerland and has a keen interest in ballroom dancing, music and woodworking.

Even with this colorful background, Harry was happy to move to Dock Woods six years ago.

"I value the mission statement," Harry says. "I affirm the solid administration, the secure financial base and the compassion of staff up and down the line. The residents themselves are great and have become family."

Harry especially enjoys the fitness center and creating stunning pieces at the woodworking center. Still, he is careful not to overcommit himself.

"If I were to be included in everything, it would be like living on a cruise ship," he says. "I choose my activities. I spend a lot of time in skilled nursing units holding hands with people and praying for them."

Branches of service: The abundance of programs and activities Harry mentions is part of what makes Living Branches unique. Another unique aspect is that residents at Living Branches use these opportunities to reach upward and outward and nourish the greater community.

"While we want to focus on excellent care and food and all that is important to retirement communities, we don't want to become exclusive—we are not a gated community," Brubaker says. "We are part of a wider community and wider world and want to find ways to have residents and staff see themselves as part of that."

It is not uncommon to see residents rocking babies at the children's center or students from Penn View Christian School volunteering with the residents.

Dock Village offers housing for families in need of rental assistance. The 100 rental facilities are not age restricted; many young people take advantage of the opportunity. Residents of Living Branches get involved in the food pantry, and students from Christopher Dock volunteer as tutors. For students with high academic achievement, Living Branches offers a Dock Village Youth Fund, which rewards students and offers scholarships to attend private schools.

Staff and residents also serve on an international level. Each year, Living Branches sponsors a volunteer from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to become part of the family. This person spends one year working with residents and developing friendships—often staying in touch with residents upon return to their home country.

But MCC volunteers not only come to Living Branches, staff and residents go as volunteers also. A fund within the foundation sponsors staff and residents to serve with MCC in the United States and overseas.

Living proof: As residents volunteer, a strong sense of community develops. This bond draws others, including staff. Alta Yoder, director of volunteers and auxiliary president, and Mark Derstine, director of pastoral services at SMH, joined Living Branches after feeling burned out from previous jobs. Yoder began as a volunteer and has worked at Living Branches for 22 years. Derstine wanted to return to pastoring and found his dream job at Living Branches nearly five years ago.

"We are blessed with a number of faith-based retirement communities in the area, and I have visited all of them," Derstine says. "There is a different level of value and of caring that the staff brings to Living Branches and that the community of residents carry for each other."

"Family members tell us the staff and residents are so committed that they act as extended family," says Cheryl Loftus, director of personal care at Dock Meadows. "This is so fulfilling to hear."

Living Branches: Sometimes families must engage in difficult conversations, specifically about death and end-of-life decisions. Living Branches is committed to talking and walking with residents as decisions are considered and finalized.

"I am often asked, Don't you get depressed?" Derstine says. "I don't. This is a sacred journey we are asked to be on with the residents. The last stages of life are meaningful, and we want residents to be cared for, respected as children of God and always treated with dignity and love."

Though death is a familiar and healthy conversation, Living Branches does not focus on the end of life. "Residents like the idea of living and growth at Living Branches," Brubaker says. "This is another stage in life, and we want to be a place where living takes place."

And so it does.

The last stages of life are meaningful, and we want residents to be cared for, respected as children of God and always treated with dignity and love.—Mark Derstine

Living proof: Rachel Myers moved to SMH on her 70th birthday in 1988. The move was not easy, especially for her husband, Jesse, who enjoyed working on their small farm and restoring antique cars.

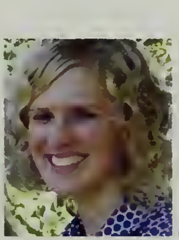
Rachel refers to the first five years as "the time of putting roots down." Through activities such as shuffleboard, bowling and the annual chicken barbeque, the Myers made friends and felt part of the community. When Jesse passed away in 1993, the community offered comfort and encouragement.

Rachel is thankful she and Jesse moved to SMH together. She is also thankful to be close to the bank, doctor, church and bowling alley, which she still frequents.

"I appreciate all of them," Myers says, referring to staff and residents at Living Branches. "I especially appreciate the mission statement, which says we do all for the glory of God, whom we love and serve."

"It's the place to be," Moore adds. "And I'm not just saying that because Ed [Brubaker] is sitting here beside me."

Moore's words are an invitation to join the community—perhaps to live, volunteer or simply visit beneath the shade of the vibrant apple tree.



Heidi Martin attends West End Mennonite Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa.

Landis Homes serves people of all ages and extends its services to the surrounding community.

Aging in place

by Heidi Martin

Volunteers at Landis Homes in Lititz, Pa., reach across a wide span of ages. Photo provided

> A Mennonite retirement community holds values that are like those of a Mennonite congregation—an emphasis on serving others, sharing the peace of Christ and compassion for those in need.—Faith Hoover

Nestled between rolling hills and rich agricultural farmland, Landis Homes Retirement Community is home to 650 residents living in cottages, apartments, suites, assisted living and health care. People may describe the 110-acre campus in Lititz, Pa., as quaint, homey, peaceful or beautiful. Each adjective is accurate, but LH is also recognized for its five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and has been selected as one of the best places to work in Pennsylvania.

Recently, LH decided to extend its mission into the surrounding community. Programs such as the Children's Learning Center, Adult Day Services, Landis at Homes and various support groups offer services to community people of all ages.

"A Mennonite retirement community holds values that are like those of a Mennonite congregation—an emphasis on serving others, sharing the peace of Christ and compassion for those in need," says Faith Hoover, director of Home and Community Services. "As Landis at Home and Adult Day Services extend the ministry of Landis Homes into the surrounding community, we take the same desire to serve others with the compassion and peace of Christ."

By reaching beyond the limits of campus, the ministry of LH is extended to people on the waiting list, those not ready to move to a retirement community and those who intentionally choose to remain at home.

Meet the Wolbach family: Dr. Albert "Bud" Wolbach received his pre-med degree from the University of Pennsylvania and graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1958. Afterward, he interned at Lancaster General Hospital for one year. Shirley graduated from the Lancaster General School of Nursing—now Lancaster General College of Nursing and Health Sciences—in 1956. They were married in December 1957.

As newlyweds, they moved to Lexington, Ky., where Bud served with the U.S. Public Health Service. He worked with imprisoned drug addicts. When the year-long term ended, the Wolbachs settled in Ephrata, Pa., where Bud designed their home with an attached medical office. He opened his family practice in 1961 and retired at the same place in November 1997.

The Wolbachs raised three daughters, who live in Erie, Pa., Chicago and England. They have three granddaughters, three great-granddaughters and, finally, a great-grandson.

A few years ago, Bud and Shirley asked LH to walk alongside them on a new journey. "It's satisfying to be on a journey with people," Hoover says. "We have a professional relationship, but much is shared. We also become friends."

Adult Day Services: The Wolbachs were introduced to Landis Homes through Adult Day Services. "Bud needed something to do, and so we thought we would go through the interview process," Shirley says. "The first day he walked in for an interview, Christy Carpenter knew him right away. Bud was the physician who delivered her. A lot of his former patients are guests there."

After meeting Carpenter, manager of Eden West, Bud felt welcomed and comfortable almost immediately.

LH offers two centers. Eden West is for older adults in need of some daytime support. Eden East is specifically for people with memory loss.

"Because we have a center designed specifically for people with memory loss, we can support people almost to the end of the disease process," Hoover says. "A big part of meeting their needs is managing the amount of stimulation they receive from the environment. This is easier to do when people with similar needs are separate from the group, and we can focus on their unique needs."

Both centers offer an array of large and small group activities, including games, trivia, embroidery, sewing, singing, baking, crafts and bus trips. The Annual Benefit Golf Outing is a highlight for all. Adult Day Services also offers services such as health screenings, personal care, hair salons, speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. A hot noon meal and ample snacks are also part of the daily schedule.

"It is important that the activities are meaningful," Hoover says.

Eden West serves 66 people and Eden East serves 38, but the waiting list is much longer.

Landis at Home: At the end of two years, Bud's health needed extra attention, and he spent time at the health-care center at LH, which offers short-term nursing care and lets patients return to their place of residence after care is completed.

Bud and Shirley found they needed more support at home. The evening hours were especially challenging for Shirley to handle alone. They agreed to home-care support from a local agency.

"We switched when I knew about Landis at Home," Shirley says.

Landis at Home offers nonmedical support to residents living on campus and community members living within a 15-mile radius of campus. Homecare aides can assist in light housekeeping, laundry, meal preparation, transportation and errands and offer care in bathing, dressing and medication reminders.

"We actively support people to 'age in place,'" Hoover says. "Sometimes people can be supported in their current accommodations with just a little bit of help."

This program is not age restricted and is available to anyone over the age of 18. Currently, 35 staff serve 250 people.

Though Landis at Home began only three years ago, clients have nothing but praise for the program. Homecare aides often serve beyond expectation, allowing people to live independently for a longer period of time. In many cases, the staff becomes an honorary member of the family.

Donna Hess became a homecare aide in her last year of school for a registered nurse degree. She played a large role in assisting Bud this past fall, helping Shirley with his evening care.

"Landis at Home never felt like a job to me," Hess says. "I never felt like I was working. Landis Homes has confidence in its employees and is trusting. It was an independent way of working, and I loved it. I felt I was making a difference in lives—it may be little, but it's something."

Support groups: Shirley chose to participate in another community program LH offers. Though she does not need the same kind of nursing care her husband receives, she appreciates confirmation and encouragement as a caregiver. This is what support groups offer.

The Memory Loss Support Group at LH is cosponsored with the Alzheimer's Association and offers a monthly meeting of education and fellowship. A speaker shares with the group at each meeting. An attorney may share about the financial aspect of memory loss care, or a representative from hospice may share about their services.

A homey place "among": This sense of kinship in support groups is uncommon in most communities yet common at LH.

"About 70 percent of LH residents are Anabaptist-Mennonite, and the value placed on service is evidenced by the volunteer service on our campus," Hoover says.

"It's amazing how young people take care of old people," Shirley says. "There are girls that have been here five, six, seven years. ... Absolutely everyone is so happy, nice and friendly."

"I love to work with people with memory impairment," Hoover says. "I like that we have a center that specifically serves people with memory loss and their families."

Hoover also takes pleasure in extending their services to the surrounding community. "I like that we can service the people in the community we live in," she says.

LH plans to extend this level of service with more community-based programs. Soon this quaint, homey, peaceful and beautiful retirement community will not only be nestled between but among the community in which they live.

Heidi Martin attends West End Mennonite Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa.

I like that we can service the people in the community we live in.—Faith Hoover

No time to get bored

Royce and Betty Engle are active volunteers at Maple Crest Senior Living Village in Bluffton, Ohio. So active, in fact, "we don't have time to get bored," says Betty.

by Gordon Houser

Royce and Betty Engle make cookies for residents at Maple Crest Senior Living Village in Bluffton, Ohio. Photo provided

Royce and Betty Engle are longtime volunteers at Maple Crest Senior Living Village.

The Engles live and serve at Maple Crest Senior Living Village in Bluffton, Ohio. Photo provided

Royce is 91, and Betty is 89, but they're still going strong, even though Royce says his heart is going bad.

The two volunteers have been married to each other for five years. They met at Maple Crest, where Betty, a widow at the time, came eight years ago when she needed some care. Royce came seven years ago with his second wife, who later died.

Their marriage "is almost unbelievable," says Royce. They "have learned to share deeply their thoughts and feelings." And they share in the many tasks they perform around Maple Crest, along with their involvement in First Mennonite Church in Bluffton.

At Maple Crest they are with people with various medical conditions, but they try to "make all contacts pleasant contacts," says Royce. And Betty adds that they always try to offer encouragement. They help in the kitchen, serving food, particularly on special occasions, and they help prepare newsletters, serve Communion and lead Bible studies. They also make cookies, with oatmeal raisin and chocolate chip being their favorites.

They don't just relate to old people; they also enjoy the young people on staff at Maple Crest. At least one young couple planning to get married asked them for advice. They told the couple to develop good communication and talk things through. Royce told them, "Remember that the other person is more important than you."

"And go to church together," Betty added. "Pray together and stay together."

Royce grew up in Abilene, Kan., and Betty in Columbus Grove, Ohio. Royce did alternative service as a conscientious objector during World War II. After attending Goshen (Ind.) College, he worked in companies dealing with farm equipment. He and his wife also served with Mennonite Voluntary Service in Illinois.

Betty was active in the United Church of Christ in various ways.

At every stage of life, people experience challenges to their faith. "We old people go through many changes," Royce says. "Our bodies change, and we must change." Nevertheless, he says, "we believe the Lord is with us through all conditions."

Their lives have not always been "happy and glorious," he says, but they've remained faithful. "The Lord has something positive for us to be doing as long as we can think and pray."

Betty says they've learned to cut quilt blocks for various churches, some from as far away as Goshen. They even do this when they're sick. "We're glad to help someone keep warm," she says.

Various groups have come to see them and ask questions. Students from Bluffton University have interviewed them for studies about personality development. And a Sunday school class of fourth graders talked to them about what they did when they were young. Royce talked to a group at Bluffton University's Lion and Lamb Peace Center about his experiences in Civilian Public Service during World War II.

Life is not always easy. "Through these transitions it's easy to become discouraged," Royce says, but different spiritual practices help counter that. They have their devotions together before bed each night, he explains, when they read Scripture and pray aloud whatever is on their hearts. They attend church and Sunday school, give money as they can to various causes, and on the first and third Mondays of each month they host their small group from church, where they discuss Scripture and prayer needs.

Then there is their marriage. To have a friend with whom to communicate in depth is very helpful, Royce says.

Betty says she has enjoyed becoming a Mennonite and learning about the faith. And Maple Crest, where they live in their own apartment, she says, is "a wonderful place."

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

A witness to the community

An interview with Ron Litwiller

Ron Litwiller is President/CEO of Mennonite Village, a continuing-care retirement community in Albany, Ore. Gordon Houser, The Mennonite*'s associated editor, interviewed Ron in April.*

How is Mennonite Village (MV) distinctive by being Mennonite-related?

Ron Litwiller: MV relates to the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference and provides an annual report. Also it is sponsored by Mennonite Health Services Alliance of Mennonite Church USA. Our two Mennonite chaplains are a part of the conference pastors group. Our board members and the CEO are required to be members of a Mennonite Church USA congregation. According to Albany's mayor, the name Mennonite means quality. We do have a reputation for value and quality in the area and in the state of Oregon. We are well-known and respected for serving most income levels. We are the only continuing-care retirement community in the state that accepts Medicaid.

How does MV promote spiritual growth?

RL: Our board and staff are guided by our covenant "to be a Christ-centered community providing life-enriching services." We further spell out what that means to us via stewardship, service and self-determination. Our covenant is highlighted each month on each board agenda and is prominently displayed at various locations throughout our campus. Bible studies are conducted by our chaplains, residents and community folks. Our chaplains are available to staff. Staff members are encouraged to pray together and for each other.

As Baby Boomers reach retirement age, how is MV preparing for the greater number of residents?

RL: We do anticipate significant numbers of Baby Boomers moving to our campus. Most will be from the local area, but others move here from California and other states. We have been extremely fortunate to have been able to expand the size of our campus. We have nearly 275 acres and have built on less than 100 acres. Some of the remaining land is wooded or wetlands, but we can build on another 100 acres. We also offer off-campus services. Our in-home care staff go out daily to people's homes and provide services. We serve people who have short-term needs for assistance or who choose not to relocate to our campus. We are also exploring a greater variety of housing options. Current homes range from about 750 square feet to 1,750 square feet. Some future housing needs may be met via apartment build-

God has blessed us with the resources to provide needed services and to expand to meet additional needs. We seek God's will through our daily tasks and as we prepare to serve future generations.

ings so that we can be better stewards of our land.

What does MV do to try to rein in increasing costs?

RL: Mennonite Village is known throughout the state for offering quality and value. Residents tell us they have considered other senior housing options, and none offers the value and services that MV offers. We remind ourselves of our need to be good stewards. We constantly explore ways to become more efficient and effective. We also have provided niche services that offer less costly options for those we serve. We have a caring and productive work force. Many staff members have long tenure here. Our increases in fees have been modest over the years. We have expanded our services to include management of other similar organizations in neighboring communities. We manage Oregon Mennonite Residential Services. OMRS has a series of group homes serving adults with developmental disabilities. It provides services to people with significant challenges—most are nonverbal, and some require one-on-one care. We also manage Corvallis Caring Place—a Catholic assisted-living facility. We also manage Hope Village, which is Mennonite-related. This is a developing senior housing campus close to Portland that anticipates significant growth. Hope currently provides housing services for about 250 residents. These management contracts have allowed us to offer specialty services to the organizations in an efficient manner. It also provides opportunity for increasing challenges and growth for Mennonite Village staff.

How does the health-care reform affect MV?

RL: It is not yet clear how we will be impacted by the recent health-care reform legislation. We pay 100 percent of our full-time employee health insurance so we see little likelihood of change being needed. We have experienced rapid escalations of the premiums over the past few years and suspect that will not change for awhile.

How is MV missional, i.e., what do you see God doing in your area and how is MV cooperating with God in that.

RL: Mennonite Village is missional in that it is a witness in the community. We are well-known and respected. We have a reputation of paying our bills on time, exercising care in adding services or new buildings, being good stewards of our resources and providing services that are needed by this community. We recognize God's guidance over the years. I invite a staff member "guest" to attend each board meeting, and the guest always reports how impressed they were to see the commitment and dedication of board members to fulfilling God's will through our provision of services. God has blessed us with the resources to provide needed services and to expand to meet additional needs. We seek God's will through our daily tasks and as we prepare to serve future generations.

What are your chief challenges?

RL: Our chief challenges are to balance the various needs with the limited resources we have available to us. We are more dependent on government payments than we would like. We have more opportunities for growth than we can address and therefore need to focus on our strategic plan. As with all service organizations we could do more for others if we had more resources.

Service Adventure volunteer Maria Martin helps a resident at Mennonite Village in Albany, Ore. Photo provided

TM SPECIAL SECTION

MENNONITE HEALTH SERVICES ALLIANCE

Relationships matter

by Gordon Houser

Maria Martin came to Mennonite Village (MV) in Albany, Ore., last August and began working as an activities assistant. But she soon learned from residents that it's relationships that matter.

Volunteers at Mennonite Village serve residents and learn from them.

After graduating from high school in Harrisonburg, Va., a year ago, Maria didn't feel ready to start college and wanted to do service. She'd heard from friends who'd had good experiences with Service Adventure (SA), a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network, an agency of Mennonite Church USA (see box), and she decided to join.

The leaders of her SA group in Albany are Jonathan and Julie Fridley, who actually met in SA in 2002 in Anchorage, Alaska. They moved to Albany from Elkhart, Ind., where Jonathan grew up and was working in construction.

Jonathan works for Mennonite Village in maintenance, but MV gives him flexibility to do what's needed for his SA responsibilities. Julie is training to be a midwife. Their term as leaders is for two years.

Also in the unit is Kyle Reimer, who works in public schools in Albany but occasionally helps out at MV when he has a free day. With him and Maria finishing up their 10-month terms this month, Jonathan and Julie have been working with Mission Network staff to find replacements in the unit, which actually has room for four volunteers.

Maria's work in the life enrichment department has given her much time to interact with residents as she helps them with games, exercises and other activities. She says she has fun learning to know the residents. She's also learned not to take people at face value.

"Some people surprise you," she says. "They may not appear to be with it mentally" but turn out to be really sharp. "Each person is different."

Being around people nearing the end of their lives has also had its effect on Maria, she says. Through them she's learned about "what's important—relationships with family, other people and with God," she says.

She's also become acquainted with residents who have since died. MV has a farewell ritual around the death of a resident. People line the hallways to say goodbye as the body, covered by a handmade quilt, is carried out of the building. This has been meaningful, says Maria, who plans to begin studies at Hesston (Kan.) College this fall.

Jonathan's work does not have him interacting as much with residents as does Maria's, and the ones he sees tend to be younger, more active. Still, he enjoys meeting people as he changes their home's air filters or light bulbs or whatever repair is needed. He also does remodeling as homes are refurbished for new residents.

He has enjoyed getting to know people from various faith backgrounds. (Only about 12 percent of MV residents are Mennonite.) He also has been to funerals of residents and witnessed both the sadness of their death and the joy of remembering their lives.

MV President/CEO Ron Litwiller says the residents speak highly of the SA volunteers, calling them wonderful and smart. SA has had people working there for about 20 years.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

What is Service Adventure?

Service Adventure invites young adults to be an extension of a local Mennonite congregation as they serve through various local social service agencies. Participants live in community with other young adults and unit leaders as they learn more about themselves and the world. As a household, they participate in weekly worship and learning times. Participants, aged 17-20, serve 10-month terms, while group leaders, aged 24 or older, serve two-year terms.

Service Adventure volunteer Jonathan Fridley does maintenance work at Mennonite Village in Albany, Ore. Photo provided

Aesop's
The Shepherd Boy & the Wolf
storytime
Retold by Jenny Dooley & Anthony Kerr

Josh Yoder shares a story in English with one of Ana's daughters. Photo provided

Living the gospel in Colombia

by Erik Yoder

Jaime negotiated the maze of motorcycles, buses, taxis, pedestrians and horse-drawn carts that jammed the streets of the Bogotá night. In the front seat, Leanne, my wife, made conversation, while in the back my son Josh and my daughter Allyson and I were silent, tired from a day overflowing with meetings and family visits.

Colombian Mennonites are claiming and living out the story of the early Anabaptists.

Our visit with Jaime's family that evening was one of many planned for us by the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church, a sister congregation since 2002 to Shalom Mennonite Fellowship, our congregation in Tucson, Ariz. This year, our family of four made up the delegation. It would be a two-week visit, a chance for us all to experience firsthand the face of the Anabaptist tradition in the context of war-weary Colombia.

Arriving at the apartment, Jaime sandwiched the car into its appointed space in the underground garage and led us up several flights of narrow stairs. The door opened, and there stood Ana, smiling broadly, beckoning us in. There were many introductions, handshakes and customary hugs. "This is such a special visit for us," Ana said. "We never have the chance to meet with international visitors."

She introduced us to three generations of family members, most of whom lived together in that tiny space, tucked away from public view. We soon found out why. They wasted no time launching into their story. The meal of arepas and chocolate would have to wait.

Ana's family was one of successful entrepreneurs and community leaders. Their hometown, however, was located in a historic stronghold of the FARC guerrillas. Many in their community were campesino farmers, caught in the struggle between the advancing and retreating guerrilla and paramilitary groups who vied for control of the area. The FARC typically raised money by charging families a monthly "vacuna" (Spanish for vaccination), a sizable payment in cash or livestock to ensure safety and protection. Often in rural areas, those who refused to pay would often be targeted, their refusal seen as open defiance.

Ana's husband's family had been among those refusing payment of the vacuna, a decision for which they later paid dearly. Assassination of family members followed. Ana said such violence in her community was commonplace, almost expected. If in one week three people turned up dead, she explained, people said, "Well, at least 10 people weren't killed this week." In a context where violence was so rooted and prolific, there was an almost calloused resignation to the killing.

Despite the tragic loss of family members, Ana's husband's family initially did their best to remain, given their roots in that community and relative economic success. They hoped the killings had been sporadic, isolated events and that stability would return to their family life. But they soon learned from a friend with connections inside the guerrilla group that their family had already been targeted for slow but systematic elimination. And so, like millions of others in Colombia displaced by decades of violence, they made the difficult decision to leave behind all they had worked for and seek the relative safety and anonymity of the capital city.

By the time many of them managed to relocate to Bogotá, still others in their family fell victim to the threats. In the capital, 10 family members clustered together in one apartment to save money and tried to stay out of sight. But the FARC was well networked. It was not long before they located and captured the grandfather and laid out everything they were planning to do to the family, although he was later released unharmed. Shortly after, the family made the decision to file formal charges with the Attorney General's office to denounce those pursuing them. They contacted friends and relatives in their home community to begin building their case.

The accumulated stress weighed so heavily upon Ana that she had a complete physical breakdown and had to be hospitalized for one month.

But the decision backfired. It yielded the family no justice and only served to widen their circle of friends and family who were now considered targets. Before long, the accumulated stress weighed so heavily upon Ana that she had a complete physical breakdown and had to be hospitalized for one month. With time she regained some strength, but their danger remained acute, and many in the family began applying for political asylum to Canada.

It was months later that the family's story began to turn. Ana received a call from a sister whose case had since been approved and had relocated to Canada. This sister had been sponsored by a Mennonite congregation there, and she was so overwhelmed by the support and love she had received that she commended the Mennonites to Ana and her family back in Colombia.

Ana followed up on her sister's counsel and found her way to the Teusaquillo Mennonite

Church in Bogotá. There they felt themselves immediately drawn to the community where, for the first time, they heard the gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation. They heard it proclaimed that violence and war were not the will of God. They met members of the community, themselves ex-guerrilla, ex-paramilitaries and victims of violence who by the power of the Spirit had received and extended God's forgiveness and accepted God's way of peace. They worshipped alongside one another not as enemies but as brothers and sisters, modeling in deed the very community of peace that was being proclaimed in word.

In short, Ana and her family were awestruck and overjoyed by this good news. There had been many churches in their hometown, both Protestant and Catholic, but none of them had proclaimed or modeled such radical alternatives to the killing and violence, which continued unabated in their community.

She told her brother's gunman that she forgave him for what he had done and that she held no bitterness in her heart for him.

At Teusaquillo there were healing services. There were Bible studies. There were prayer groups. In the safety and solace of these meetings, Ana and her family cried their first tears of pent-up grief, and the Spirit's work of transformation brought change. They clung to the words of the Scripture they were given. They shared one such passage with us that evening, one they had claimed as God's unique promise for them: "Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night. ... The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended" (Isaiah 60:18-20).

As we listened to their family's story unfold, the entire room seemed to lighten, and their countenance visibly changed when they reached the point in the story where they discovered the church. They shared more examples of the radical difference the church had made in their lives (although they were by no means at that moment completely out of danger).

Ana recounted how one evening there was a gathering at the church. Many displaced families were present as always. These included, by definition, ex-guerrilla, ex-FARC, their ex-victims and other members. While they were gathered, the electricity went out, leaving them all together in the dark. Ana recalled how the meeting quickly turned into a party, with impromptu games and celebrations. They had so much fun together that no one left the church that evening until midnight. This illustrated for Ana how radical the transformation had been in the lives of the congregation's members, who months and years prior had been mortal enemies.

Ana's mother followed with a story no less astounding. She recounted how several months after she had joined the church she had been walking one day through the streets of the capital. It so happened that she came face to face on the sidewalk with one of the gunmen she had known to participate in the killing of her brother. Somehow she was able to extend the gift of grace she had so recently received. She told her brother's gunman that she forgave him for what he had done and that she held no bitterness in her heart for him. She proclaimed to him God's love and forgiveness. There in the street, they embraced one another and the man broke down in tears.

As I listened to her recount these events, I was struck by the similarity of her story to the ones I had grown up hearing in *Martyrs' Mirror*, stories of my own Anabaptist forebears who had openly forgiven their tormentors and bore witness to God's love that surpassed the violence around them. And here I was, in this tiny, crowded apartment in Bogotá, Colombia, at that moment surrounded by this once broken family, who were now claiming and living out the story of the early Anabaptists for themselves.

During our two-week stay, we met other families whose stories rivaled similar depths of pain and joy. It was a privilege to witness our sister congregation being a place of unconditional openness to so many broken people, so hungry for the words of hope they proclaimed and modeled. No less astounding was the way many of the displaced families, though often in grave danger themselves, assumed a similar posture of service in the church, working alongside others in ministries of feeding, healing and education. This was true even as they struggled to regain safety and equilibrium in their own lives.

I perceived no visible distinction here between the "personal gospel" and the "social gospel," as often seems the case in North American churches. Here it was simply the gospel, bound together and proclaimed in all its fullness: personal salvation, forgiveness and release from one's past, the call to service and the way of non-violence. It should be no wonder, I suppose, that this message, when placed against the backdrop of such extreme violence and inhumanity, continues to make the church a compelling community for displaced families such as Ana's.

For many in Colombia, daily life presents many obstacles over and above what we would consider normal for our context. But thankfully, the miracles keep pace. The Teusaquillo congregation maintains a weekly feeding program in a neighborhood replete with street people and addicts. They prepare food packets for distribution as they interact with those in need.

On our second Sunday there, Adaia, who helps regularly with the feeding program, shared what had happened the night before. They had arrived with some 300 food packets to find about 600 street people anticipating their arrival. They quickly saw their predicament and did what they so often do in the face of yet another obstacle. They prayed. Then, they handed out the food packets. What they experienced that evening was the multiplication of their "loaves and fishes" to the point of everyone being fed, with food left over.

I found it hard to believe they considered something so dramatic almost commonplace. It all seemed such an alternate reality to the life of sufficiency and abundance that I lead. (Somehow the gospel looks different through the lens of job security and a retirement plan.) While I do not mean to discount the God I know here, whom I often experience working more through subtleties and distinguished shades of gray, Colombia for me was a more pronounced version of the kingdom in black and white.

And while I remain an "ethnic" Mennonite who can trace his biological lineage all the way back to my 16th-century Anabaptist roots, it was in Bogotá that I came face to face with my Anabaptist forebears and the God they walk with each day.

Erik Yoder is a member of Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Ariz.

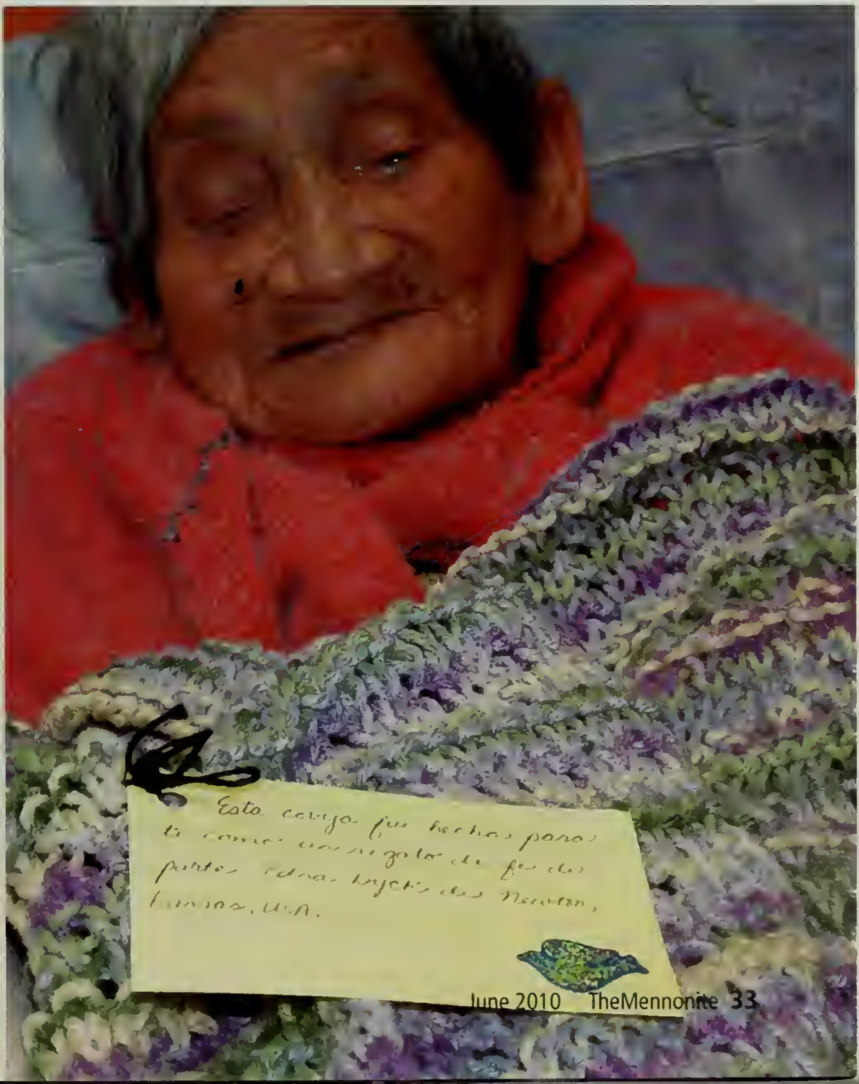
The sister-church relationship

In January 2001, the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church in Bogotá, Colombia, proposed a sister-church relationship with Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Ariz. With pastor Peter Stucky and two other members who were visiting the United States, they brought a small folder of photos and descriptions of their congregation and its ministries.

The relationship has evolved and grown since then. A delegation from Shalom has gone to Colombia every year but one to experience what church looks like in Bogotá. More than 15 members of Shalom have visited, some a second time. The Teusaquillo congregation has sent representatives to Tucson as well. This past year, one of its young adult members served in the local voluntary service unit as an outreach to the homeless.

In recent years, the two congregations have collaborated to open and later renovate a feeding center and after-school program for children in a high-need neighborhood. They have also cosponsored a greeting card recycling program providing income to displaced women in the capital city.

Last year, the Shalom delegation delivered 84 handmade lap blankets made by congregants and friends in Tucson and throughout the United States and Canada. The blankets were gifts for the residents of Hogar Cristiano La Paz, a nursing home sponsored and operated by the Mennonite Church in Colombia.—*Erik Yoder*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One of the residents of Hogar Cristiano La Paz enjoys her new blanket. Photo provided

A church with no walls or ceiling

Pastor Martin Gonzalez' church has no walls or ceiling. Not even a level floor. But if you look past the cardboard shacks of his congregants, clinging to the side of the ravine, it's a beautiful view: lush green mountains, crops in bloom, a few brightly painted houses sprinkled around the valley.

Three years ago, he and Elsy, his wife, left the salary, benefits and four walls of their more traditional Mennonite congregation with a burden for the marginalized families of Anopoima. Anopoima is a small city in Colombia that is quickly gentrifying with moneyed families. With no more than a guitar, a Bible and some food or used clothing, he trekked to the ravine on the edge of town where the families were squatting.

Among others, they met Alicia, a wheelchair-bound girl barely in her teens. The house was cobbled together from scavenged pieces of metal and scraps of wood, its floor irregular and rough, difficult for even an able-bodied person to negotiate.

Martin used his video camera to document and publicize the living conditions of these fragile families. They openly petitioned government officials to follow through on promises to relocate the families to newer housing developments.

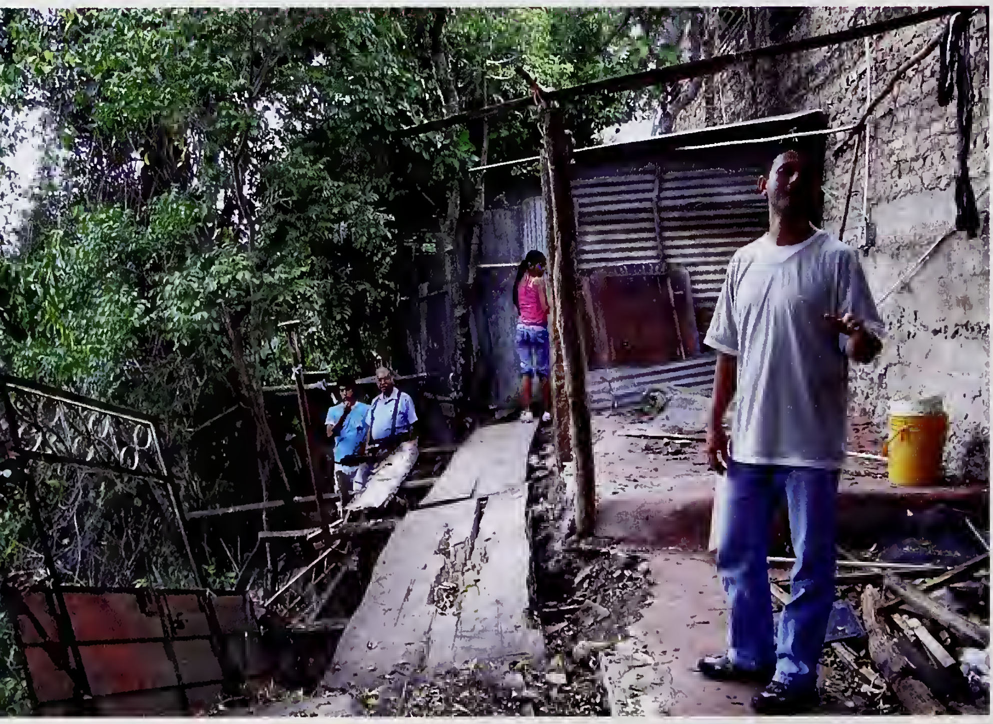
"We think Jesus and Menno Simons would have made the same decision," Martin says. "But it has been scary for us. We didn't always know where the food or tuition money for our children would come from. But God has been so faithful in providing for us each day."

While they still visit the people on the hillsides, Martin and Elsy continue their pastoral work with many of the original squatter families in the new housing development where they now live. The fruits of their ministry are already evident as they walk from door to door, greeting their congregants. Children are clean, bathed and healthy. Grandmothers beckon them inside. Second-story additions are already under construction.

Martin and Elsy's decision to set aside their secure income and build the church on the edge of town is but one of many stories in Colombia of pastors who have taken up the cross. Like Martin, many such pastors would desire a sister church in North America. They have much to teach us about the road of faith.

If your congregation is interested in exploring the possibility of a sister relationship with a Colombian church, you may contact Amanda Guldemond at iglesiashermanas@justapaz.org.
—*Erik Yoder*

Alicia (left) with her sister in her new bedroom. Photo provided



Pastor Martin near the ravine's edge, the former location of Alicia's home. Photo provided

A legacy and a future in aging services

Frederick Mennonite Retirement Community in Pennsylvania is the oldest Mennonite-affiliated institution for older adults, tracing its roots to 1896. Others soon followed, including Mennonite Home in Pennsylvania and Bethesda Home in Kansas. Why did Mennonites commit themselves to serving older adults? Why do we continue these services? What does the future hold?

The long short response is this: There was and is need. Uniquely, Mennonites never developed these facilities exclusively for members of the denomination. Although a strong mutual aid impulse grew out of a collective we-care-for-our-own attitude, Frederick, Mennonite Home and the Rittman Home in Ohio (which later moved to Illinois and became The Communities of Maple Lawn) began with the motive to care for others beyond the Mennonite family. This inclusive approach to service has been consistent and strong.

The development of church-related retirement communities exploded between 1960 and 1980. Examples include Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, OrrVilla Retirement Community in Ohio and Sierra View Homes in California. These new organizations were inspired by a strong commitment to mission but were also fueled by three dynamic marketplace factors:

- rising real estate values, enabling seniors to sell their homes and move to a retirement campus;
- the emergence of Social Security, providing a steady income baseline; and
- expanding government programs such as Medicaid, Medicare and government-subsidized housing.

Challenges today: Today MHS Alliance links more than 45 church-related aging service ministries. Each is located in a dynamic marketplace and employs a diverse work force.

These ministries face many challenges. The three underlying sources of stability and support for aging services have changed during the past few decades. The real estate market has eroded. Social Security is not guaranteed into the future. Baby Boomers, the next generation of retirement community residents, have far fewer resources than their parents and face an uncertain future. And the amount of government funding flowing into social services will likely not increase. So as the percentage of older adults within the overall U.S. population grows, funding sources are decreasing. Thus, a daunting challenge lies before our ministries to stay faithful to their mission and to maintain operational viability.

What about the future? The mission remains clear. Research bears out that older adults live longer, better and more meaningful lives in community. Mennonite-affiliated aging service providers will offer older adults a supportive environment.

Mennonites' shared convictions about creating community and seeking peace, justice and healing have always shaped our retirement communities. However, the forms of service will change continually as we move into the future, owing in part to the ongoing development of new technologies.

In the future, new kinds of partnerships will develop between congregations and providers of senior services. They will make mutually supportive covenants with each other, with nearby congregations and with neighboring communities. Tel Hai in Pennsylvania, Hope Village in Oregon and Schowalter Villa in Kansas are exploring possibilities with their supporting congregations.

Provider organizations will increasingly work together in cooperation—not competition—to create new alliances and sometimes organizational consolidations. The Anabaptist Providers Group (a Pennsylvania organization), Greencroft Communities in Indiana and Ohio, and Living Branches in Pennsylvania illustrate an increasing commitment to collaboration.

Finally, our member organizations will expand their missions to serve a broader range of needs. They will offer new programs that support individuals in their homes while also maximizing technology in new ways. Landis Homes and Rockhill Mennonite Community in Pennsylvania and Mennonite Home in Albany, Ore., are experimenting with new applications of technology.

A projection: Fifty years from now, we as a community of faith will rejoice that we kept our focus on serving older adults in these ministries. We will have renewed our faith again and again by staying committed to God's work of healing and hope in Jesus Christ. In doing so, the church will have helped fulfill Jesus' second great commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." TM

Rick Stiffney is president/CEO of Mennonite Health Services Alliance of Mennonite Church USA.

Research bears out that older adults live longer, better and more meaningful lives in community.

A modest proposal for our colleges

Alan Stucky is pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church in Harper, Kan.

It's not every day that you have an epiphany that helps you understand the world in a new way. Several summers ago I had one that helped me better understand my church.

I was sitting in a seminar at the South Central Mennonite Conference annual gathering listening to John Sharp tell about the history of Hesston (Kan.) College. As he recounted the beginnings of the college, he said the question raised at the Kansas-Nebraska Conference gathering in 1907 that began the process of forming Hesston College was, "Would it advance the cause of Christ to have a Mennonite college in the west?" Sharp's next sentence was, "Never mind the fact that Bethel College had already been there for nearly 20 years." What became clear to me in that moment was that the relationship between the former General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the former Mennonite Church (MC) was not one of antagonism but of irrelevance. It's not that the two groups were at odds but that even though they would have seen each other as Christian, they didn't see each other as being similar enough to even be in conflict, let alone consider working together.

Let everyone in Mennonite Church USA agree to speak accurately and truthfully.

Eight years after the official merger of the two denominations, there is still a palpable tension between the church schools. Distrust, misinformation and stereotypes have all contributed to a level of antagonism that leads some to see some of our institutions as not even Christian.

While there is no shortage of inaccurate stereotypes floating around our colleges, the reality of the situation is that if you compared all the Bible and religion faculty at all five of our Mennonite colleges, many would be surprised at their similarity of views and their adherence to mainstream Anabaptist beliefs. All our Mennonite institutions have and are making significant contributions to Mennonite history and theology. From John Roth to Patty Shelly to Trevor Bechtel to Marion Bontrager or Mark Thiessen Nation, all our Mennonite institutions are furthering the rich Anabaptist tradition.

To be truthful, however, we must admit there are some real differences in how our church colleges function, especially in relation to Mennonite Church USA. The differences among the schools, however, come more from the historical differences between the MCs and the GCs than anything else. The problem we find ourselves with is this: We have lost the language to describe adequately the differences within Mennonite Church USA and especially among our church schools. As this language has faded, it has been replaced by terms such as "liberal" and "conservative," and all our children are left with is that Dad doesn't like Bluffton or Mom doesn't like Goshen. Ultimately, the oversimplification of the issues and the language involved is simply inaccurate and unhelpful.

My sincere hope is that we can work through this persistent animosity. To that end I offer a modest proposal.

- Let everyone in Mennonite Church USA agree that all our church colleges are genuinely attempting to be faithful Christian institutions in the Anabaptist understanding of the faith.
- Let all of us agree to speak accurately and truthfully, actively working to dispel all stereotypes and rumors.
- Let us all think it possible that we may have something to learn from each of our colleges and seek to learn from those who are different from us.
- Let us all have the maturity to admit where we have contributed to divisions and humbly ask forgiveness from each other and from God.

Since the merger, our denomination has been struggling to come to a new understanding of identity. Many of us have seen ourselves in a particular way for our lifetimes or even generations. With the merger, many of us are now confronted with a denomination that has a different identity from what we have ever known. While the animosity among our church schools has its particulars, it is one of the concrete areas in which the growing pains of our struggle for a new identity can be felt. In a relatively short period of time, our church has expanded to include institutions and people that some of us, quite frankly, didn't think possible. What is called for now is not a purging of our differences in search of uniformity but a call to unity that draws strength from our varied perspectives and traditions. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Home after the nest

Four years ago we left Youngest Bird at college. At the time I wrote about how empty it was in that nest. Amid concluding Mother Bird Joan and I would be OK, I reported on tears in a silent house. Then by my next column I was confessing that, um, actually we were enjoying loving Departed Birds instead of In-Nest Birds.

I also forecast that birds would be in and out of the nest and that this would be fine, this is the way our culture now is, let's flex and grow in a world in which they come and go. I didn't know how true this would be. We had nine months of empty nest. Then some bird has lived with us ever since. We were mostly fine, but Parent Birds would sometimes say with glances at each other, Remember, oh remember, that so sweet and so evanescent empty nest?

If home is only about the nest, then many of us are doomed to homesickness.

Now things are yet more complicated: Last week (as I write this in early May), Youngest Bird finished college. And now, except for Oldest Bird, settled in Olympia, every bird is moving to a new nest.

Middle Bird moved last night. At bedtime a ringing phone shattered the quiet of our first hours of a new empty nest. What now? our looks said. It was Middle Bird. "I love my new life." OK, we could manage that interruption. And we scratched our heads. How did this come to be? This was the bird who by her final years in the big city was so traumatized in our increasingly dangerous neighborhood (it seemed to get better after someone torched two of the nearby crack houses) she was one reason we decided to try a different type of nest for a while. Now this, of all birds, was the one who had moved right smack into the big city's downtown.

Today came another pile of wedding invitation acknowledgments. I don't open these; even as I celebrate that in Christ there is no male and female, for some reason Youngest and Mother Birds seem more invested in them. But I know what they mean: Youngest Bird will be married soon. And she and our son-to-be will move into their own nest in Virginia.

I am aware of this because for a time we competed for nests. Joan and I also needed a nest in Virginia, because I'll be living there much of the earlier part of many weeks due to my new job, and she'll sometimes join me there, even as I'll often live with her in our old nest much of the later part of many weeks. So for months Youngest and Parent Birds were trying to get an apartment in the exact same area. When one day we found ourselves exploring the same apartments, Youngest Bird was unhappy with my thinking that if we wanted the same one, whoever got to it first got it.

There was also the wedded couple's hope to build a new life away from parents. My taking a job in the same town caused consternation. No problem, I stressed, I'd not eat every meal with them. Youngest Bird assured me I could live in their doghouse.

So here we are. Our primal nest emptied as never before, birds scattered to the winds. Once more there is sorrow. There are the memories, precious memories, longing-filled memories of those few fleeting decades we were all in one place. There is the stretching of our love across old nest and apartment nest Joan and I will need to work at.

There are also the signs that home is more than being together in a nest. This matters, because if home is only about the nest, then not only we but countless ones of us are doomed to homesickness.

But a few weeks ago, Mother Bird moved heaven, earth and airline schedules so that all of us achieved a miracle: 24 straight hours together. We went to the shore, checked into our hotel and too soon were apart once more. Yet for those few hours we lived in kairos—the fullness of time, God's time, time richer and deeper than the ticking minutes—and Home.

We don't really know yet how to live in Home, spiritual togetherness, when nest as home is more memory than actuality. But we look forward to learning. And we also, poised at the edge of what was and what is to come, can see just how vital to the building of Home—for us, for all humans who long to be more than alone, for a culture so often better at scattering than gathering, for a church seeking ways to help us glimpse the meaning of being in God's nest—those earlier years of home are.

Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., is dean-elect at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and publisher of Cascadia Publishing House, LLC.

MVS signs agreement with Selective Service

Mennonite Voluntary Service member of Alternative Service Employer Network

Ryan Miller

Stanley Green, Mennonite Mission Network executive director/CEO, shakes hands with Selective Service director Lawrence Romo.

On April 20 in San Antonio, Texas, Mennonite Voluntary Service and the Selective Service entered into an agreement making MVS the first faith-based organization to become an officially recognized employer for conscientious objectors, should the draft ever be reinstated.

"I have appreciated the opportunity to learn about Mennonites, and we are proud that our first agreement of this kind could be with the Mennonites," said Selective Service director Lawrence Romo. "It's important to respect each other's religions. It is a founding principle of the United States, and so it's important to have a robust alternative service program."

Romo and Mennonite Mission Network executive director/CEO Stanley Green signed and solidified this agreement during a ceremony at San Antonio Mennonite Church. This is the first agreement of its kind to be signed by the Selective Service in 25 years and makes MVS an official member of the Alternative Service Employer Network.

"The importance of this signing is that it ensures that, in the event of a draft, people who have convictions about war and come from historic peace church backgrounds can serve their country with their convictions intact," said Green. "We believe it is just as patriotic to serve human need in our country as it is to serve through war."

The agreement has been in the works for six years and is the first of its kind to be signed. Costley and Romo hope the agreement between MVS and the Selective Service will serve as a prototype for other such agreements.

"Most people don't know about the options for alternative service," said Cassandra Costley, alternative service manager for the Selective Service and the staff member who helped negotiate this agreement with MVS. "We believe this mission is equally as important as preparing for the draft."

Costley lauded conscientious objectors throughout history who have committed to alternative service in the United States because of the sincerity of their beliefs.

"Many conscientious objectors have put themselves in great danger through service, but they have simply refused to take up arms against others," she said. "Once America understands who conscientious objectors were in our past, they will better understand who they could be in our future."

MVS has been providing opportunities for adults age 20 and over to serve alongside communities across the United States since 1946.

Adults have the opportunity to serve for one or more years and to live in intentional communities. Currently, MVS hosts 93 participants at 23 different locations.

"MVS has a rich and long history, and this partnership with the Selective Service gives us an understanding and a way to keep moving forward to provide service for young Mennonites and also for other conscientious objectors," said Hugo Saucedo, director of MVS and a San Antonio resident. "We believe in the importance of service, whether it's because of the draft or because it's a lifestyle. For us, it's definitely been a lifestyle."

During the ceremony, Saucedo, Director Romo and Green each gave short remarks. After the signing, the floor was opened for questions from spectators.

For more information about MVS, visit Service.MennoniteMission.net.
—Hannah Heinzekehr of Mennonite Mission Network

University, colleges name new leaders

Kevin Nickel, Nancy Heisey and Tim Lichti take new positions.

Three Mennonite colleges welcome new faculty and staff.

A current faculty member will become vice president and undergraduate academic dean at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Nancy Heisey, professor of biblical studies and church history at EMU and currently chair of the Bible and religion department, will begin a three-year term in her new role on July 1.

The appointment was announced by EMU president Loren Swartzendruber and EMU provost Fred Kniss. Vernon Jantzi, professor emeritus of sociology, has been serving as interim undergraduate academic dean this academic year.

Kniss says, "The search committee identified four primary characteristics that the next academic dean should embody: an 'inductive visionary,' a leader who could make good decisions expeditiously, communicate them clearly and implement them effectively; an advocate for the faculty and the resources they need for personal and professional development and a scholar committed to a holistic approach to student learning. We believe that Nancy Heisey has the experience, motivation and disposition to meet these high standards."

Heisey joined the EMU faculty in 1999, following a distinguished career of administrative leadership with Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. In 2009, she completed a six-year term as president of Mennonite World Conference.

She received a bachelor's degree from Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.; a Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.; and master's and doctoral degrees from Temple University, Philadelphia.

Heisey is married to Paul Longacre, who volunteers in community and family organizations in Virginia and Pennsylvania and is a member of Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kevin A. Nickel will become the new vice president for fiscal affairs at Bluffton (Ohio) University beginning Sept. 1. Nickel will succeed Willis Sommer, who is retiring at the end of August after 31 years of service to Bluffton, including the last 16 years as vice president for fiscal affairs.

Since 2006, Nickel has been the director of finance/controller at Eastern Mennonite University. He obtained his bachelor's degree in accounting, with a minor in economics, from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and his master's in business administration from Bethel College in Mishawaka, Ind.

Nickel has 12 years of financial management and accounting experience at nonprofit organizations, as well as additional experience in private industry.

In addition to Eastern Mennonite University, he has worked at Greencroft Retirement Communities in Goshen, Ind., and Camp Friedenswald in Cassopolis, Mich.

Nickel's responsibilities have included budgeting, financial reporting, financial audits, purchasing and supervision of staff and accounting/business office functions. In those settings, he worked closely with the human resources, financial aid and physical plant offices and staff.

Nancy Heisey

Kevin Nickel

Tim Lichti

Tim Lichti of Goshen, began his work as director of pastoral ministries for Hesston (Kan.) College in February. He replaced David Greiser, who left the post to pastor North Baltimore (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Lichti has a Master of Divinity from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., a bachelor of arts from California State University, Long Beach, and an associate of arts degree from Long Beach City College. He attended Hesston College for one year in 1969.

Previously, Lichti served Indiana-Michigan Conference of Mennonite Church USA as a conference regional minister from 2000 to 2009 and was co-founder and executive director of Menno-Hof, a visitor and information center in Shipshewana, Ind., from 1987 to 2000. Lichti pastored Marion Mennonite Church in Shipshewana from 1979 to 1987.

Hesston's pastoral ministries program was developed in 1985 to meet a need for mature students with a strong call to ministry for pastoral work. Students take classes in Bible, theology, church ministry, supervised experience, general education and a seminar in formation.

The program may be completed in either a two- or three-year plan. Lichti sees it as playing a vital role in pursuing Mennonite Church USA's churchwide goal of developing and nurturing leaders.

Still residing in Goshen, until he and his wife move to the Hesston area this summer, Lichti has been focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the program and how it functions, both on campus and in the broader church.—*Eastern Mennonite University, Bluffton University and Hesston College*

Positive financial news for The Mennonite, Inc.

Series of articles on sexuality is also scaled back after further review

The board of directors for *The Mennonite* got some good financial news at its board meeting April 24 in Goshen, Ind. The corporation ended its fiscal year on Jan. 31 with a $37,196 margin after expenses of $502,105. This is the first time in three years that The Mennonite, Inc., has had such a margin and boosts the corporation's equity to $114,243. This in spite of a decrease in advertising revenue. In 2008, *The Mennonite* had $147,423 in advertising revenue but only $118,706 in 2009.

Three factors compensated for the decline in advertising income: a record level of contributions from readers, austerity measures initiated by staff in 2008 and 2009 and a reduction in the cost of printing the magazine. Readers contributed $89,718 during the last fiscal year, up from $79,993 the previous year. Printing costs, however, were $97,451 in the last fiscal year, compared with $123,106 the year before.

In response to the positive news, the board asked its executive committee to look at the austerity measures initiated in 2008 and 2009. These included reduction in FTE for several staff members, no cost-of-living increases, discontinuation of *OurFaith Digest*, no first fruits contribution to Mennonite Church USA and a decision to have the auditor examine selected accounting records rather than doing a full audit. The board will then consider restoring some of those cuts after the first quarter results for the new fiscal year.

Circulation trends: Since its March 2009 meeting with a publications consultant, board and staff members have begun keeping track of readers of all media produced by The Mennonite, Inc., not just readership for the print magazine. This includes the number of "absolutely unique visitors" to the Web site, the number of people who subscribe to the weekly English-language ezine *TMail* and the number of people who subscribe to the monthly Spanish-language ezine *Meno Acontecer* (see graph). While circulation for *The Mennonite* magazine continues to decline slightly, readership for other media continues to grow. Staff estimates that approximately 33,000 people read what is published in all media; this is up from an estimated 25,000 five years ago.

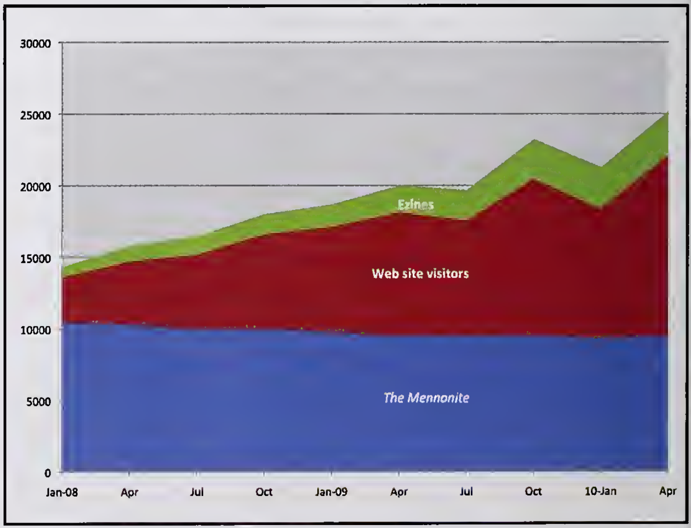
Moratorium: Each meeting of the board for *The Mennonite* includes a discussion of the 2000 moratorium on letters and articles that address Mennonite Church USA's teaching position on human sexuality. At its September 2009 meeting, the board suggested a series of articles that would assist the church in its ongoing debate around sexuality issues. That series was later revised and supported by the Executive Board in its Feb. 18-20 meeting. However, the Constituency Leaders Council asked for more information about the series when it met March 17-19. According to CLC moderator Dick Thomas, 30 members voted against *The Mennonite* publishing the series, 10 voted for it and the remaining 35-40 members indicated no preference. In response to this counsel, *The Mennonite* will not publish the entire series; the editorial staff is now developing a proposal to publish three or four articles beginning next fall.

Yutzy recommendation: During a closed session, Mennonite Church USA staff members Ervin Stutzman and Marty Lehman discussed the recommendation made to the Executive Board by LaVern Yutzy that "*The Mennonite* become (sic) the official publication of Mennonite Church USA and a part of the denominational office communications department." No decisions were made.

In other matters, the board supported in principle the relocation of its Goshen Ind., office to the new office building planned by Mennonite Church USA in Elkhart, Ind., near Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The office will move if it is economically feasible.

The board for *The Mennonite* will meet next at the Leaders Forum Sept. 23-25 in Pittsburgh.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Circulation and readership



The blue section represents the number of copies printed, or "circulation," of the print magazine. Each annual readers' survey reveals the "passalong" (to other people) rate. The passalong rate shows that readership of *The Mennonite* is currently about 20,000. Surveys also reveal the "passalong" rate for the ezines (green) *TMail* and *Meno Acontecer*; while 3,100 currently subscribe, readership is approximately 4,000. The magazine's Web site (red) now gets more than 13,000 visitors each month.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Goshen cuts 29 staff, administrative positions

Second phase of budget alignment includes restructuring academic programs

As part of a first phase in addressing a deficit in the 2010-11 budget, Goshen (Ind.) College will save $1.1 million by eliminating 15 full-time and 14 part-time administrator and staff positions, as well as through a variety of other consolidations and reductions of hours of positions.

As part of a second phase of the college's budget realignment, leadership has begun the process of restructuring/prioritizing academic programs for the 2011-2012 school year.

"We anticipate this process will result in a likely reduction in faculty positions," says vice president for academic affairs Anita Stalter."

After finding cost savings in all nonpersonnel-related areas over a couple of years and freezing all salaries since June 2009, "at this time—though it is difficult and painful—we need to make adjustments to our personnel levels because our projected expenses are higher than our revenue," says vice president for finance Jim Histand.

"We are thankful to each of these colleagues who have contributed a great deal to our campus during their years of service," he says. "They have done good work, and none of the positions was eliminated due to job performance issues."

Salaries of all employees will remain flat for the 2010-2011 academic year, and the college's contribution to retirement accounts will be reduced. As well, the president's council will be taking additional voluntary salary reductions.

"The factors contributing to our need to make these changes at this time are multiple," says Histand. "Some are short-term impacts and some are longer-term structural issues that have led to this budget imbalance."

Short-term factors relate to the overall economic recession, including the decision to increase student financial aid in response to greater need by students and their families.

The long-term factors relate to the college being considerably larger in terms of physical campus and staffing than colleges with similar enrollments.

The college's enrollment did not grow as projected over the past two decades, and its staffing is consistent with an institution of more than 1,200 students, though closer to 900 full-time students are enrolled. In addition, the college's commitments to fiscal responsibility include maintaining quality facilities and timely repayment of construction bonds.—*Goshen College*

RESOURCES

For the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts, edited by W. David O. Taylor (BakerBooks, 2010, $14.99), includes essays by Eugene Peterson, Lauren Winner, Jeremy Begbie and others that take us beyond "how we've always done it," beyond fads, beyond mere imitation of the culture and beyond utilitarianism to develop a substantive vision for the place of the art—and artists—in our churches.

Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and New Ideas for Creating Congregations by Stuart Murray (Herald Press, 2010, $19.99) suggests that church planting isn't just about numbers—it's about the renewal of the church and the development of new ways of being the church that are biblically rooted and contextually appropriate.

Together We Can: Traveling with Mennonite Central Committee Meat Canner by J. Loren and Wanda Yoder (2010, $25) is a coffee-table book with more than 200 color photographs that chronicles the Yoders' 20,000-mile, seven-month journey accompanying the meat canner for a season, from Oct. 8, 2008, to May 1, 2009. Order from the authors at 341 Maple Grove Road, Belleville, PA 17004, jlyoder@embargmail.com, 717-935-5317.

Against the Tide: Love in a Time of Petty Dreams and Persisting Enmities by Miroslav Volf (Eerdmans, 2010, $18) collects essays that urge Christians to reflect in our lives the love that God is, in contrast to the pettiness and selfishness so prominent in our culture today.

Jerusalem Testament: Palestinian Christians Speak, 1988-2008 by Melanie A. May (Eerdmans, 2010, $22) bears witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the faith and hope of Palestinian Christians living in the Occupied Territories. It presents statements by the Jerusalem Heads of Churches on the situation of Palestinians in the Holy Land over a 20-year period.

Hiking the Trail and other Biblical Walks in the Galilee by Anna Dintaman and David Landis (Village to Village Press, 2010, $29.95) includes information about the Jesus Trail—maps, suggested itineraries, practical information about travel, accommodations, food and gear, and over 200 photos.

Oscar Romero and the Communion of the Saints by Scott Wright with photos by Octavio Duran (Orbis Books, 2010, $20) is an illustrated biography of a modern prophet and martyr, the Archbishop of San Salvador who was assassinated in 1980 after becoming a voice for the poor and speaking out against death squads.

Colleges, universities graduate 1,143 students

Bluffton, Hesston, EMS, EMU and Goshen celebrate commencements.

On May 8, Hesston (Kan.) College faculty member Luann Yutzy places a stole on the shoulders of Pastoral Ministries graduate Dan Coburn of Accident, Md., as Coburn's wife, Marlena, looks on.

Bluffton (Ohio) University
270 graduates, May 9

What seem like easy answers should be considered further because truth is complex, Bluffton University graduates were advised May 9 by the associate director of the Mennonite Education Agency.

"There is not one clear, dogmatic, singular, simplistic view of earth care, immigration or any of the other hot topics that beg for polarization," said Elaine Moyer, a Bluffton alumna and the speaker for the university's 110th commencement ceremony.

"When faced with a simple answer, pause and wait for—even seek—the complicated," she told the roughly 270 graduates. "For it is within the complicated that we truly and humbly lead."

She noted that the answer to the question Why choose Bluffton? on the university's home page begins, "Simple … Bluffton's four enduring values of discovery, community, respect and service set Bluffton apart from other institutions."

"Choosing Bluffton University is indeed a 'simple' and wise choice," added Moyer, a 1972 graduate who returned later as a faculty member, administrator, coach and, most recently, as a trustee from 1991-2009. "The impact, however, of being immersed and influenced by the core values that faculty, staff, administrators and students espouse engages complexity."—*Scott Borgelt of Bluffton University*

Hesston (Kan.) College
137 graduates, May 9

The 137 members of Hesston College's 100th graduating class walked the stage on May 9 in a 9 a.m. service at Yost Center and were addressed by faculty and staff "polar opposites" Tony Brown and Dustin Galyon on the topic "We Must Be the Change." Brown, who is a social science faculty member and artist-in-residence, described himself as "introverted, quiet, drawn to the mystical and contemplative, African American, sometimes reluctant and cautious and at times finds it difficult to trust." He wondered what it would take to bring together a collaborative commencement address with Galyon, the extroverted public speaker who is Hesston's associate director of admissions and men's basketball coach.

"Despite my initial impulse to question, I am honored to have had the privilege of working with Dustin," Brown said. "Crafting this address collaboratively in a give-and-take fashion was a metaphor for what is needed as we look ahead to life in the 21st century."

"I understand now that this exercise was an important lesson in realizing the importance of interdependence," Galyon said. "The seductive pull toward individualism is an ongoing challenge for most U.S. citizens. What is imperative now is that we must find the way to be in relationship with each other and be changed by each other."—*Carol Duerksen for Hesston College*

Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.
16 graduates, May 1

"God knows what possesses anyone to enter the ministry in our day," Stanley Hauerwas told the graduating class of Eastern Mennonite Seminary on May 1.

Sixteen students received graduate degrees during the seminary's 61st annual commencement held in Lehman Auditorium at EMU. Fifteen received master of divinity degrees, and one received a master of arts in church leadership. Two students received ministry certificates.

Hauerwas, the Gilbert T. Rowe professor of theological ethics at the Divinity School of Duke University, began his commencement address by enumerating the problems with Christian ministry today, including a lack of clarity about what the church is, what a minister is to spend his or her time doing, and who gets to tell a minister what to do.

"I'm taking time to characterize some of the challenges of ministry," Hauerwas said, "because I want to suggest how the work you have done in seminary is crucial for the work you will do as a minister if you are to sustain the ministry for a lifetime."

"What you have learned to do in seminary is read," he said. "By learning to read you have learned to speak Christian. One of the essential tasks of those called to the ministry in our day is to be a teacher. In particular, you are called to be a teacher of language.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. 432 graduates, May 2

Eastern Mennonite University celebrated its 91st annual commencement on the front lawn of campus May 2. EMU president Loren Swartzendruber conferred 432 degrees—315 undergraduate (including 115 Adult Degree Completion Program recipients), 101 graduate degrees, one associate degree, nine graduate certificates and six study and training certificates—during the two-hour ceremonies.

It felt like a homecoming for graduation speaker Joseph B. Martin, who, after completing one year of medical school at the University of Alberta at Edmonton, came to EMU and studied one year, receiving a B.S. degree in Bible in 1959.

"That one year [at EMU] transformed my life spiritually, emotionally and philosophically," he said.

Martin is professor of neurobiology at Harvard Medical School. Prior to this appointment in 2007, he served 10 years as dean of the faculty of medicine at Harvard University. While there he helped establish, in 1999, the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, an innovative collaboration that brings together seven Harvard-affiliated institutions intent on reducing the burden of cancer.

EMU awarded a posthumous honorary degree to Kathleen S. Eberly of Hershey, Pa. She was enrolled in the master of arts in education program at EMU Lancaster and had completed all coursework except for her action research project when she died Nov. 1, 2009, of cancer.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

Lindsey Grosh, who graduated from Eastern Mennonite University cum laude with a bachelor of arts degree in photography with minors in TESL and Spanish, was a regional winner in a nationwide contest sponsored by Celadon Trucking Services.

Goshen (Ind.) College, 288 graduates, April 25

Goshen College's class of 2010 received degrees on April 25 after they were described as the light of the world by president James E. Brenneman and encouraged to become immortal by the chief administrative law judge of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Class of 2010 consisted of 288 graduates—21 candidates for master's degrees, 183 candidates for bachelor of arts degrees, 34 candidates for bachelor of science degrees and 50 candidates for bachelor of science in nursing degrees.

A highlight of this year's commencement was the conferring of the college's first master's degrees in nursing. Master's of science degrees as family nurse practitioner and clinical nurse leader were conferred to 14 students.

The commencement speaker was Ronnie A. Yoder of Alexandria, Va., the chief administrative law judge for the U.S. Department of Transportation. In his address, "A Niche for You—Immortality," Yoder talked about his father and his journey to becoming a federal judge, and he encouraged the graduates to establish college scholarship funds for others. He also offered advice on finding a niche in life and finding common ground with others.

Yoder, who noted his Amish and Mennonite background, said he has centered his life on the teachings of Jesus and the lessons he learned from his parents, including these: Set your dreams high and don't give up on yourself or your dreams; leave a place better than you find it; don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today and, when in doubt, don't.—*Richard R. Aguirre*

Brian Steiner

During Goshen College's 112th Commencement on April 25 (left to right), graduates Betsy Houser and Jonna Buller celebrate together.

MCC plans long-term recovery in Haiti

Mennonite Central Committee establishes priorities for future after earthquake

Ben Depp

Sainterne Beona draws water from a cistern at an MCC-supported water distribution site in Cité Soleil, part of Port-au-Prince.

After weeks of careful assessment and planning in Haiti, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has established priorities and plans that will guide its ongoing response to the Haiti earthquake.

From food security and education to economic development and housing, the plans are designed to empower Haitians to rebuild their communities better than they were before the Jan. 12 earthquake.

The rebuilding plan is intentionally holistic, focusing on multiple areas of support, says Virgil Troyer, a regional disaster management coordinator who has worked in Haiti since the earthquake.

Generous donors have given MCC about $13.09 million and potential contributions from Canadian Foodgrains Bank and other sources could boost the total contributions closer to $20 million.

MCC envisions a three- to five-year expenditure of that money, initially in the Port-au-Prince area and west of the city, where several MCC partners are working.

However, MCC will gradually shift the focus of its work to the Artibonite Valley, about 1½ hours northeast of Port-au-Prince. MCC already has programming established in the town of Desarmes.

The Haitian government estimates that 600,000 people have fled Port-au-Prince for rural communities, 162,500 to the Artibonite Department, where the Artibonite Valley is located.

The Haitian government would like them to settle outside Port-au-Prince because the infrastructure of the capital city could not accommodate its population before the earthquake.

MCC's Haiti staff and MCC's international program development leaders established the long-range priorities when they met in Haiti in late March.

They assimilated input from MCC's partners, MCC Haiti national staff and international workers and Haitian political leaders into the plan.

Priority areas in which MCC's support and finances will be focused include:

Emergency assistance: Distribute food in the Port-au-Prince area until May, when cash-for-work programs was to be offered. Urban and rural distribution of relief kits, tarps and tents, first aid kits, water filters and sheets and comforters will continue through the summer.

Economic development and food security: Support cash-for-work projects in areas damaged by the earthquake; develop income-generation projects and improve agriculture and irrigation systems in the Artibonite Valley.

Housing: Hire one person to assess new housing arrangements for people in nine camps for internally displaced people in Port-au-Prince, where MCC has been working from the beginning of its emergency response. This priority also includes assisting with temporary to permanent housing for displaced people in the Artibonite Valley.

Construction techniques: Hire a structural engineer to train construction workers, engineers and architects in hazard-resistant construction techniques.

Education: Assist the Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice (FOPJ) to buy land and build a primary school in Port-au-Prince; explore ways to expand educational infrastructure in the Artibonite Valley to accommodate those who have migrated there from the capital; consider adding university or vocational education opportunities there.

Health: Address sanitation and water needs in camps for internally displaced people in and near Port-au-Prince; explore collaboration with other organizations and the Haitian Ministry of Health to provide expanded health services in the Artibonite Valley.

Trauma healing: Provide resources for appropriate trauma-healing services.

The long-range plan will continue to be re-evaluated and redefined as the work progresses, Troyer says.—*Linda Espenshade of Mennonite Central Committee*

MVSer, program walks with sex offenders

The key to accountability program model is community, says director.

Hannah Heinzekehr

Jordan Zickafoose and Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower converse in the COSA office.

John* used to be afraid to participate in community beyond the four walls of his home.

A registered sex offender whose parole ended last summer, John is cautious to avoid situations where he might be tempted to re-offend, but this cautiousness also led him to avoid making friends and participating in the world outside his home. John's life changed when he became a part of the Circles for Support and Accountability (COSA) program in Fresno, Calif.

Once a week for 2½ years, John has met with a community of volunteers who serve as mentors and friends for him. These volunteers have walked alongside John, providing support and accountability as he seeks to recreate his life.

Today, John is still careful, but he's found healthy ways to re-engage society. He serves as a volunteer in several circles for other offenders and has begun volunteering alongside Mennonite Voluntary Service participants at a local food pantry.

Formed as a ministry of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific University, COSA has been walking alongside sex offenders like John as they seek change and rehabilitation since 2007. Today, with their funding in jeopardy, it's unclear how COSA will continue.

Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, director of COSA in Fresno, first encountered COSA (a rehabilitation model that is commonly used throughout Canada) when she attended a training on the model in 2006. At a career transition point and seeking direction, Ruth-Heffelbower decided to attend on a whim and found herself drawn to the model. Upon her return to Fresno, Ruth-Heffelbower applied for and received a grant from the California Department of Corrections, and COSA was born.

MVS participant Jordan Zickafoose of Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church has been volunteering with the COSA program for two years. MVS, one of Mennonite Mission Network's Christian service programs, invites adults such as Zickafoose to spend one to two years serving and living in community in locations around the country. Zickafoose is a part of several circles, and through his work, he says, he has learned much and seen many people change.

"When I tell people what I do, sometimes they wonder why I'm involved with this work," says Zickafoose. "They think sex offenders can't change, but I believe everyone deserves a chance to be rehabilitated and to change."

In the three years COSA has been operating, none of the offenders involved in circles have re-offended.

"The key to this model is community," says Ruth-Heffelbower. "Community offers our core members (offenders) a place to learn social skills, to feel accepted, to be open and honest, and to find accountability and support. Isolation is a very dangerous place."

However, despite this positive track record, the grant from the California Department of Corrections has run out, and COSA is running on reserve funds from the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies and volunteer labor. They are actively pursuing new grants. And COSA is not just changing the lives of core members; it's impacting volunteers as well.

"We often get to hear core members talk about how COSA has affected them or been instrumental in their lives," said Zickafoose, "but volunteers also talk about their learnings as well. They are not only there to provide support and accountability, but the core members are giving back to us, too."

One long-term core member, Mike*, died tragically in a car accident a year ago. Zickafoose and other members of the circle helped plan Mike's funeral, and Zickafoose wrote and sang a song commemorating his life. Several members shared stories of ways Mike's life inspired them.

"There are so many places where we have seen incredible progress," says Ruth-Heffelbower. "And often, relationships become so strong the groups continue to meet, even when it seems the need is not as great anymore."

The COSA program in Fresno is the largest of its kind in the United States.

*Last name withheld for confidentiality—*Hannah Heinzekehr of Mennonite Mission Network*

Ministries come of age in Ecuador

People gather for celebration of 20 years of Mennonite involvement

Many people from many different contexts contributed to the celebration of 20 years of Mennonite involvement in Ecuador, Patricia Urueña said of the festivities that took place March 13-14 in Quito.

Also recognized was the 10th anniversary of the Ecuador Partnership that brings together Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Colombia (Colombian Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Mission Network in collaborative mission.

In 2000, the Colombian Mennonite Church sent Urueña and her husband, César Moya, to serve through the Ecuador Partnership. Urueña cited an impressive series of milestones as she reflected on the past 10 years of partnership activity. Activities that topped her list included:

- establishing a relationship of trust with indigenous people that bore fruit in an invitation to train church leadership;
- building a vibrant congregation in the capital city;
- planting another congregation in the mountains of Riobamba;
- multiplying Anabaptist believers through teaching in seminaries and workshops;
- assisting refugees.

"Sometimes we think we should stop with the dreaming, but God is always giving us visions and ideas," said Moya.

In addition to supporting indigenous church leaders with theological training and planting churches, Moya and Urueña have provided vision and leadership to various other ministries, including the Colombian Refugee Project, which provides refugees with temporary shelter and microfinance loans for small businesses, and Edu-Paz, a collaborative project with neighborhood and school officials to help children learn positive values and conflict-resolution skills.

Since 2008, Moya and Urueña also have taught courses on peacemaking themes at Seminario Sudamericano, a Pentecostal seminary that draws students from many Latin American countries.

During the week of anniversary celebrations, members of the Mennonite churches in Riobamba and Quito hosted a partnership delegation, the eighth fellowship-and-work team to visit Ecuador. The visitors from Colombia and the United States attended partnership business meetings, worshipped with an indigenous church in San Antonio, met with refugee families who have fled violence in neighboring Colombia, visited the seminary and heard stories of peacemaking from Edu-Paz participants.

Riobamba Mennonite Church, four hours southwest of Quito, began regular Sunday meetings in March 2009. The congregation took root in Bible studies that Moya and Urueña led with a group of people interested in Anabaptist theology. In 2008, Mission Network workers Don and Jan Rheinheimer arrived in Riobamba and helped the group grow from a small Bible study to a church of about 30 adults and children.

Kevin Goerzen

Patricia Urueña sings as she presents a cake celebrating the 20th anniversary of Mennonites in Ecuador.

In September, Moya and Urueña will begin a sabbatical at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Moya plans to work on his doctoral thesis comparing Anabaptist and Latin American theologies, while Urueña hopes to participate in a peace studies program. They will share some teaching responsibilities at AMBS and in congregations.

Urueña expressed great confidence in the leadership ability and spiritual maturity of the seven members of the Quito Mennonite Church council to shepherd the congregation during the absence of the pastoral couple.

The oldest of Moya and Urueña's three children, Daniel, graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College in April and hopes to find work and service opportunities in northern Indiana. Juan Camilo and Andrea plan to study at Goshen College, as a sophomore and freshman, respectively.—*Holly Blosser Yoder with Lynda Hollinger-Janzen*

Vietnam Mennonite Church ordains 26 pastors

Vietnam Mennonite Institute in Theology and Renewal officially opens.

Gerry Keener

The 26 newly credentialed pastors and their wives sing a song of consecration after the ordination.

After what felt like a long, cold winter of hard work and preparation, the Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) is enjoying a lush springtime of growth and development that parallels the rapid economic and social development of the country.

Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, chairman of the VMC, officiated at a joyful March 20 ceremony in Ho Chi Minh City, graduating 30 students from an in-service pastoral training class and ordaining 26 Mennonite pastors who had come from provinces and cities all over Vietnam.

Trung had led a small group of faithful Mennonites during three decades when the church was not officially recognized by the government. This public celebration, in which government officials even sent congratulations and colorful bouquets to the newly credentialed leaders, moved him.

More than 100 Mennonite leaders and lay believers joined the festivities, held in a large banquet hall near the church's headquarters.

Pastor Nguyen Minh Sang, general secretary of the denomination, led in an opening prayer of thanks to God for blessing the church. Vice chair Nguyen Hong An led a period of worship.

Trung, assisted by Gerry Keener, a nonresident missionary with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), handed out certificates to 30 graduates who had been meeting one week per quarter for the past four years.

In the ordination service, Trung charged the 26 pastors, all of whom had completed the certificate program and were serving in pastoral positions in Mennonite churches, to commit themselves fully to the work of the Lord. He urged them to share the gospel with godly passion.

Another celebration came a week later with the official opening of the Vietnam Mennonite Institute in Theology and Renewal. The new school, which offers a bachelor's degree program in theology, had just enrolled 14 students and finished its first week of classes. Palmer Becker, under special assignment by Mennonite Church Canada, and Keener collaborated to teach "The Biblical Story" as the first course in the new bachelor's level program.

Pastor Sang reported that the VMC now has 90 local churches and about 8,500 members with 140 pastors and evangelists across the country.

Mennonite Central Committee first entered Vietnam in 1954, followed by workers with EMM in 1957. A local Mennonite church grew to around 150 baptized members before being closed in 1978. The missionaries all left in 1975.

For the next 15 years, without contact with North America, Nguyen Quang Trung kept the vision of a Mennonite church alive, and he repeatedly attempted to register the church with the government.

In 1997, EMM workers Gerry and Donna Keener went to Vietnam and quietly connected with Mennonite leaders and churches for fellowship and leadership training. Although the Keeners spent most of their time working in administration and teaching at the Saigon South International School, they were always delighted when opportunities for pastoral training with Mennonites emerged.

Then in 2007, when the Vietnamese government officially recognized the Vietnam Mennonite Church, the doors opened for the church to legally organize its own leadership training schools.

This has truly been a kairos time for the Vietnam Mennonite Church.—Ray Brubacher

In March, the Keeners began a half-time role as nonresident EMM missionaries to Vietnam with a focus on theological education and leadership development for the Vietnam Mennonite Church. The Keener family had moved back to the United States in the summer of 2009, but Gerry was delighted to be present for the launch of the Vietnam Mennonite Institute, the graduation and ordinations.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

MHS Alliance members 'resource one another'

Rick Stiffney shares how CEOs shape the faith identity of organizations.

Stuart Showalter

From left: Duane Oswald, Cheryl Schade and David Heusinkveld take part in a roundtable discussion.

"Being resources to one another in challenging times" was a theme that emerged from the annual Mennonite Health Services (MHS) Alliance annual members meeting, held March 4 in conjunction with the Mennonite Health Assembly in Norfolk, Va. Resources included research, leadership development programs, consultancies at various levels and personal friendships.

Rick Stiffney, president and CEO of MHS Alliance, told the representatives of 37 of the 74 member organizations that they have lived through "a roller coaster of economic challenges" during the past 18 months.

Half the members who had responded to a survey taken in February said they are "doing OK but working to manage issues," and another 25 percent said they are challenged or stressed. The main contributors to stress were funding cuts at local, state and federal levels (cited by 60 percent of respondents) and reduced demand for services (cited by 20 percent of respondents).

One of the resources Stiffney brings to MHS Alliance is his own in-depth study of how CEOs shape the faith identity of the not-for-profit organizations that comprise MHS Alliance. He noted that Mennonite/Anabaptist churches have developed "an impressive array of institutions," but practices vary widely among these institutions in how faith informs practice and how institutions engage with both their founding churches and the social order beyond the church.

In his research, Stiffney focused on this core research question: How do you as CEO understand your role and work as it relates to shaping the faith identity of the organization you serve? Stiffney responded to that question by conducting extensive interviews with the CEOs of 10 MHS Alliance member organizations.

Stiffney said that his research yielded four themes that have an impact on the faith identity of the organizations he studied:

- A personal Christian faith for the CEO provides a shared frame of reference for developing an organization's faith-based identity, with personal integrity being essential to the CEO's credibility.
- The convergence of the CEO's personal sense of call and the mission of the organization is a source of motivation, focus and power for the CEO's daily work. CEOs represent and live the organization's mission.
- Sense-making: CEOs need to offer a frame of reference for the organization's identity in communication with various constituents. CEOs often experience tension between articulating a commitment to Mennonite/Anabaptist faith and effectively serving pluralistic markets.
- CEOs contribute to a distinctive Christian organizational culture and identity by repeatedly engaging in practices that nurture such an identity: demonstrating a personal faith, emphasizing the elements of organizational identity in orientations for employees and using rituals thoughtfully to reinforce core values.—*Mennonite Health Services Alliance*

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Immigration bill raises questions for 2013 convention

Planners are discerning whether to cancel contract with Phoenix, Ariz.

The location for Mennonite Church USA's 2013 convention—Phoenix, Ariz.—is being called into question because of Arizona Senate Bill 1070, which passed on April 23.

Two weeks before news of the Arizona immigration bill hit national headlines, Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, met with the Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau to discuss her disappointment with and concern about the upcoming change in legislation.

"Our national convention is meant to be a reunion of Mennonite brothers and sisters from across the country, representing many ethnicities," Swartzendruber Miller said. "This bill does not send a welcoming message."

Arizona Senate Bill 1070—the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act—declares that it is a crime to reside in Arizona as an illegal immigrant and that law enforcement has the right to demand proof of legal residence from people suspected of having illegal immigrant status. In Arizona, 30 percent of the population is Hispanic.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership has been in conversation with racial/ethnic leaders within the church to discern the most appropriate course of action regarding the convention location.

"As a church, we intend to stand alongside and support our Hispanic brothers and sisters who are deeply affected by this new law," says Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Yvonne Diaz, executive director for Iglesia Menonita Hispana, shared her disappointment with the Arizona bill in a recent letter to church leaders.

"I grieve the effects of this law on our Latino congregations and all Latinos in the United States," Diaz wrote. "At the same time, I also have hope that Mennonite Church USA will rise to the task of supporting immigrant brothers and sisters. Let's use our creativity to figure out how this can be a teaching moment for the whole church."

Regarding next steps for convention planners, Swartzendruber Miller says, "the question we will be grappling with is, Will we be helping the situation by refusing to meet in Phoenix to show that we are resisting this unjust law? Or is God calling us to face this injustice by being a present witness of healing and hope in the Phoenix community?"
—*Mennonite Church USA*

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PENNSYLVANIA to EUROPE (June 19 - July 2)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE (June 24 - July 5)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE II with JOHN SHARP (June 29 - July 12)
ITALY, AUSTRIA & GERMANY (July 7-17)
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SWISS GLACIER EXPRESS (July 29 - August 11)
EUROPEAN HERSHEY CUSTOM (August 13-24)
FAITH LUTHERAN HOLY LAND TOUR (September 5-16)
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PULSE attracts Mennonite young adults

Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience celebrates 15 years

Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience (PULSE) celebrated its 15-year anniversary in July 2009. The small Pittsburgh program, rooted in the Mennonite tradition, also celebrated a threefold increase in applicants from last year and increased support from donors.

According to Jessica Wilson, former board chair, this growth comes from intentionally communicating PULSE's values and mission, which is to "cultivate a community of young servant leaders to transform Pittsburgh."

"We've become more sure of who we are," Wilson says. "The values and the way we do our work draws in many young people from Mennonite backgrounds."

Over the past 15 years, PULSE has brought more than 100 college graduates to Pittsburgh, and a third of its alumni still live in Pittsburgh. Executive director Chris Cooke says the Mennonite identity of PULSE remains an important component. Cooke is Presbyterian.

"Mennonite identity comes from who PULSE is at our core," Cooke says. At the same time, Cooke says he is excited about the diversity of participants for next year. The participants live together in an eight-bedroom house. They come from Mennonite and Catholic backgrounds, among others. Wilson, who comes from a Catholic faith background, says PULSE shares values with other faith backgrounds and attracts non-Mennonites to the program. "While we aren't evangelical," Wilson says, "PULSE allows us to share our faith and values."

However, PULSE leadership is not intentionally working to become more ecumenical, Wilson says. The majority of participants and a small majority of its eight-member board of directors come from Mennonite colleges and universities.

Cooke praises the quality of the participants and alumni from the Mennonite colleges and universities—namely Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., Bluffton (Ohio) University and Goshen (Ind.) College.

A participant's story: Emily Swora, a participant and graduate of Goshen College, works as an outreach coordinator at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater in East Liberty.

"To be valued by my community, my placement and Chris has impacted how I see my role as someone in the community," Emily says. "Without PULSE, I would've been more 'me-focused.' Now I'm more Pittsburgh- and community-fo-

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cused." According to Swora, most of this year's participants identify themselves as Mennonites, and they have the strongest connection to Pittsburgh Mennonite Church, rather than other churches in the city. One of the other participants, Kyle Wetherald from Bluffton University, is a pastoral intern at PMC.

Swora says she feels more rooted in "communal faith" in the PULSE program than she felt in college. "There's accountability; it's hard to fall through the cracks," she says.

The foundations of PULSE: John Stahl-Wert, who attends Pittsburgh Mennonite Church and is president of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, founded PULSE in 1994. Prior to that in the 1980s, Stahl-Wert worked as a director in the Discipleship Ministries office of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Stahl-Wert describes three distinctive qualities of PULSE not found in other Mennonite Voluntary Service or similar programs:

The first is a seminar component. Participants learn about the city, themselves and social issues during one afternoon per week.

Second, the placements at various nonprofits in the city relate directly to the individual participant's interests and skill set. These placements include a diversity of work that includes art and radio.

"[PULSE] is more about the development of the participant than a to-do list we may have for Pittsburgh," says Stahl-Wert. "When we [have a to-do list], we miss a palate of creativity. I used to say to PULSE applicants, 'Your service matters. But I'm interested in what will come to your mind and who you will become over time.'"

Stahl-Wert says it appears that Mennonite Church USA is now beginning to think this way too about service and leadership development.

The third distinctive is PULSE's local funding and a local board that is in support of Mennonite Church USA.

Stahl-Wert describes PULSE as "spiritually connected" to Mennonite Church USA but "organizationally independent."

"Local control offers sustainability," he says.

Areas of growth: This 15-year anniversary provides a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future, celebrate the overcoming of financial struggles PULSE faced about four years ago and note PULSE's operational maturity, Wilson says.

She says the board is considering a variety of growth areas: adding a new house with a similar program model, engaging a different population in a different program model and deep engagement with alumni and local supporters—all while staying true to PULSE's mission.

"We're coming at opportunities in the future with operational strength," she says. "We're asking How can we pursue our mission even further?" For more information, go to www.pulsepittsburgh.org.—*Anna Groff*

Editor's note: Groff is a PULSE board member. For a longer

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CALENDAR

Native Assembly, July 19-22, Ashland, Mont. Sponsored by Native Mennonite Ministries, USA and Native Ministries, Canada. Hosted by Northern Cheyenne Mennonite Churches. Gathering of Native Mennonite churches in the United States and Canada. Highlight: Native speakers include one from Paraguay and one from Panama. Gathering begins on Monday evening and concludes on Thursday evening. Guests welcome. For further info contact: Carol Roth, NMM staff at 769-232-7512 or Email: mcroth@comcast.net; Willis Busenitz, pastor, at 406-592-3643 or Email: willisnadine@juno.com; Neill/Edith von Gunten, Canadian staff at 204-888-6781 or nativeministry@mennonitechurch.ca.

WORKERS

Angustia, Nicolas, was installed as team leader of the Atlantic Coast Conference/ Lancaster Mennonite Conference Oversight Ministry Team in New York City at a commissioning service, April 23, at Iglesia Menonita de Primera de Brooklyn. Nicolas continues to serve as lead pastor at the Iglesia Menonita Unida de Avivamiento, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Carrion, Sonni, was licensed for specific ministry for service on the Atlantic Coast Conference/Lancaster Mennonite Conference Oversight Ministry Team in New York City at a commissioning service, April 23, at Iglesia Menonita de Primera de Brooklyn.

Furry, Joseph, was ordained as associate pastor of youth and young adult ministries at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on April 18.

Hadtasunsern, Chaiya, was ordained as pastor of the Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church, Hickory, N.C., on Feb. 21.

Jaime, Celso, was installed as team leader of the Atlantic Coast Conference/ Lancaster Mennonite Conference Oversight Ministry Team in New York City at a commissioning service, April 23, at Iglesia Menonita de Primera de Brooklyn. Celso continues to serve as pastor at the Evangelical Garifuna Church, Bronx, N.Y.

Otto, Emory, was licensed as pastor for Marriage Encounter Church at Millport Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa., on March 14.

Peachey, Byron, was ordained in the teaching cluster of special ministries in Virginia Mennonite Conference for his ministry as associate campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., in the Martin Chapel of Eastern Mennonite Seminary on April 11.

Perez, Sandra, was licensed for specific ministry for service on the Atlantic Coast Conference/Lancaster Mennonite Conference Oversight Ministry Team in New York City at a commissioning service, April 23, at Iglesia Menonita de Primera de Brooklyn.

Rhee, James, was ordained as pastor of Stephens City Korean Community Church, a church plant of the Northern District of Virginia Mennonite Conference, at Stephens City Mennonite Church, Stephens City, Va., on March 28.

Shenk, N. Gerald, **and Sara Wenger Shenk** were ordained as Teaching Elders at The Table in Harrisonburg, Va., on March 21.

OBITUARIES

Albrecht, Miriam M. Sutter, 86, Goshen, Ind., died March 31. Spouse: Alfred J. Albrecht (deceased). Parents: Lee and Alma Nafziger Sutter. Children: James "Jamie," Trish Yoder; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 10 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Bachman, Lucinda LaVerne Burkey, 94, Goshen, Ind., died March 19. Spouse: Richard Christian Bachman (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Mattie Troyer Burkey. Children: Marianne Pletcher, Joseph, Frederick; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Beck, Charles E., 78, Archbold, Ohio, died April 20. Spouse: Arva Short Beck. Parents: Harley and Frances Klopfenstin Beck. Children: Mark, Luana King, Linda Dickerson, Dave; 14 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Birky, Katherine M. Lampl, 91, Kouts, Ind., died March 27. Spouse: Ralph Birky (deceased). Parents: Louis and Iva Reinhardt Lampl. Children: Sandra Birky, Janice Helmuth Dorn, Myrna Overholt, Cheryl Gusler; 12 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 1 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Bontrager, Mary Ellen Yoder, 65, Millersburg, Ind., died March 21 of a heart attack. Spouse: William Bontrager (deceased). Parents: William J. and Sylvia Schlabach Yoder. Children: Cheryl D. Ward, Mickie C. Welch, Jan Teel, Ronald, Harold; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

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Brenneman, Clara Elizabeth Grieder, 86, Elida, Ohio, died April 14 of a stroke. Spouse: David Samuel Brenneman (deceased). Parents: Oscar and Mary Wilkins Grieder. Children: Stan, Judy Delagrange, Nancy Drake, Susan Brenneman; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida.

Brenneman, Janice Louise Ridgway, 61, Gainesville, Fla., died April 3 of ALS disease. Spouse: Fred P. Brenneman. Parents: William and Louise Ridgway. Children: Jacob, Daniel; one grandchild. Funeral: April 7 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville.

Buller, Dean D., 87, Henderson, Neb., died March 26. Spouse: Esther Evelyn Ediger Buller (deceased). Parents: John and Dora Doell Buller. Children: Burton, Neal, Ardean, Kermit; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 31 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Burkey, Nancy Ann Wenger, 69, Lebanon, Ore., died April 12 of cancer. Spouse: Galen Burkey. Parents: Ira and Mildred Wyse Wenger. Children: Steven, Debra Nelson; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 16 at Lebanon Mennonite church.

Chupp, Drucilla A., 84, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 15 of heart failure. Parents: Andrew L. and Anna B. Yoder Chupp. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Detweiler, Alvin T., 93, Plumsteadville, Pa., died April 12. Spouse: Anna R. Rosenberger Detweiler. Parents: Abram and Sarah Tyson Detweiler. Children: Carol Anna Gross, Ronald, Gerald; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 16 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Derstine, Marvin, 86, Souderton, Pa., died March 26. Spouse: Beulah Landis Derstine. Children: Keith, Suzanne Young, Christine Derstine Martin; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 31 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Ewert, Milton Homer, 76, Modesto, Calif., died March 13. Spouse: Katherine "Joann" Lohrentz Ewert. Parents: Henry J. and Lena Tiahrt Ewert. Children: Jeanine, Steven, Harlan, Burton; seven grandchildren. Memorial service: March 20 at Modesto Church of the Brethren.

Farmer, Leon, 45, Adams, Okla., died Feb. 9 of a brain tumor. Parents: Alwane and DeeDee Farmer. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Turpin Mennonite Church, Turpin, Okla.

Friesen, Gladys Huebert, 98, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Herman I. Friesen (deceased). Parents: Peter E. and Marie Pankratz Huebert. Children: Janice Siebert, Marlene Ott, Joan Friesen, Lloyd; 12 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Gehman, Esther M., 85, Lititz, Pa. and Landisville, Pa., died April 19. Parents: Barton B. and Mabel Martin Gehman. Funeral: April 24 at Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz.

Graber, Marjorie Ann Ewert, 77, Freeman, S.D., died March 11. Spouse: Cleon Graber. Parents: Alfred and Bertha Ewert. Children: Teresa Dick, Linden; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 15 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Groff, Thelma Miller, 86, Goshen, Ind., died March 20. Spouse: Weyburn Woodrow Groff. Parents: Ernest and Ruth Blosser Miller. Children: Rachel White, Margaret Groff Reinhardt, Cheryl Groff Hess, Ed; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hostetler, Martha Ellen Miller, 80, Sarasota, Fla., died April 16 of heart failure. Spouse: Levi L. Hostetler (deceased). Children: Linda Mendel, Marilyn Harr, Cindi Smith; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 22 at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Huber, Milton G., 96, Lancaster, Pa., died April 4. Spouse: Ethel G. Shertzer Huber (deceased). Spouse: Elva M. Huber (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Bertha Good Huber. Children: Mary Ellen Hadaway, Norene Lantz, J. Milton Huber, R. Dale Huber; step-children: Matilda Denlinger, Wanda Potts, Willard Shertzer, John Shertzer; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: April 10 at Oreville Chapel, Mennonite Home, Lancaster.

King, Genevieve Mae King, 97, Stuarts Draft, Va., died April 20. Spouse: Harold R. King (deceased). Parents: Ben B. and Malinda Mann King. Children: D. Wayne, Carol Bowers, Arnold, Sue Brittle; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

King, Uarda C. Birky, 88, Valparaiso, Ind., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Harold C. King (deceased). Parents: Jake and Emma Miller Birky. Children: Judy Bachert, Janice Trulley, Marvin, Keith, Byron, Rodney; 18 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.

Klippenstein, Alvin, 69, Altona, Manitoba, died March 19. Spouse: Grace Zacharias Klippenstein. Parents: C.D. and Helen Rempel Klippenstein. Children: Greg, Tim, Shawna Osoeke, Rachel Wahl; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Koehler, Laurine F. Birky, 92, Goshen, Ind., and Kouts, Ind., died April 18. Parents: Reuben and Malinda Schweitzer Birky. Children: June Piper, Rose Plank, Sue Hanson, Samuel, Richard, Robert, Melvin; 21 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 21 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Kope, Ruth A. Dettweiler, 87, Reedley, Calif., died April 5. Parents: Edward Abraham and Stella Clara Ruth Dettweiler. Children: David, Robert, Jean Kope, Linda Kope, Donna Matthies, Lois Kope; 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley,

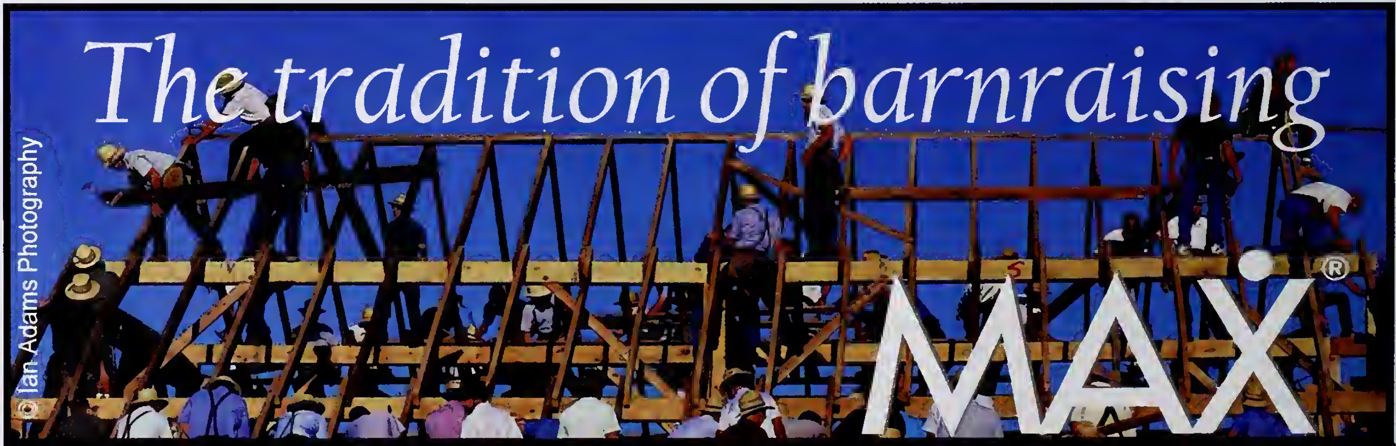
Kraybill, Maribel Garber, 85, Lititz, Pa., died March 22. Parents: Martin R. and Suie G. Kraybill. Memorial service: March 27 at Landis Homes, West Bethany Chapel, Lititz.

Kurtz, Catherine Elva Good, 77, Manheim, Pa., died April 14. Spouse: Chester Ivan Kurtz (deceased). Parents: Allen and Hannah Good. Children: Marianne Yoder, Jewel Wood, Eric, Eugene; 13 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa.

Kurtz, Elam Stoltzfus, 86, West Jefferson, N.C., died April 26 of heart disease. Spouse: Orpah Mae Horst Kurtz. Parents: Christian John and Elsie Stoltzfus Kurtz. Children: Karen Gross, Michael, Becky Kurtz Kvinta, Kevin; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 1 at Boone Funeral Home, West Jefferson.

Martin, Hilda Byler Sudermann, 98, Goshen, Ind., died March 30. Spouse: Jacob Suderman (deceased). Spouse: Ellis Martin (deceased). Parents: Thomas L. and Nancy R. Schrock Byler. Children: Annemarie Sudermann, Paul K., David P., John J.; three grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Ruth L. Wallick, 95, Dundee, Ohio, died April 14. Spouse: Jacob A. Miller (deceased). Parents: Chalmers and Neola Warner Wallick. Children: Keith, Beverly McNutt, Helene Torgler; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio.



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Nice, Mary Virginia Yoder, 94, Morrison, Ill., died April 6. Spouse: Cecil Deter Nice (deceased). Parents: J. Harvey and Lydia Irene Hertzler Yoder. Children: Elaine Nice, Dolores Nice-Siegenthaler, Rachel Beth Kauffman Nice, David Siegenthaler, Lisa Burchett Nice, Harvey, Steven, Eldon, Michael, Vivian Nice; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 9 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling, Ill.

Peters, Ardean James "A.J.", 68, York, Neb., died March 23. Spouse: Bette Tonniges Peters. Parents: Abraham R. and Olga Penner Peters. Children: Garet, Lisette Liudahl, Stacey Michels; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, York.

Schrock, Philip M., 64, Wooster, Ohio, died March 3. Spouse: Rayene Rohrer Schrock. Parents: Glen and Arlene Schrock. Children: Sheila Slaughter, Jason; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 8 at Orrville Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Siemens, Ruby Katharine Epp Kehler, 89, Altona, Manitoba, died April 4. Spouse: Peter Siemens (deceased). Spouse: John U. "Hans" Kelher (deceased). Parents: Henry C. and Katharine Loeppky Epp. Children: Joyce Friesen, Grace McLeod, Carey and Sandra Dyck; stepchildren: Angela Brandt, Darlene Dusevic, Rudy Siemens, Karen Sawatzky; 10 grandchildren; nine step-grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; 10 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 7 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Stauffer, Elmer Roy, 94, Goshen, Ind., died April 13. Spouse: Florence Lela Christophel Stauffer (deceased). Parents: Ezra and Lydia Reed Stauffer. Children: Joan Chupp, Kenneth, Clair; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; one step-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 17 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Weldy, Grace Fern Bixler, 93, Goshen, Ind., died April 13 of cancer. Spouse: Levin Ray Weldy. Parents: Fred and Martha Beutler Bixler. Children: Bonnie Grace Miesel, Fred Levon, Franklin Lee; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Wenger, Lester S., 81, Manheim, Pa., died March 5. Spouse: Mary Jane Wenger. Parents: John N. and Phoebe Sensenig Wenger. Children: Linda S. Bentzel, June F. Nolt; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim.

Witmer, Dale E., 62, East Petersburg, Pa., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Jeanne M. Wert Witmer. Parents: J. Stanley and Ethel Witmer. Children: Donovan, Douglas, Denison, David; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Yoder, Dorothy Zook, 98, Belleville, Pa., died March 22. Spouse: Irvin Yoder. Children: Audrey Herbster, Curtis Yoder. Memorial service: April 18, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Yoder, Keith Eugene, 85, Kalona, Iowa, died April 5. Spouse: Della Troyer Yoder. Parents: Lewis and Arvilla Gingerich Yoder. Children: Joette Droz, Brian, Judy Hookway; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 8 at Wellman Mennonite Church, Wellman, Iowa.

Yoder, Lucille Rachel Beckler, 89, Kalona, Iowa, died April 17. Spouse: Max Yoder. Parents: Edward and Fannie Roth Beckler. Children: Gaylord, Wanda Yoder, Weldon, Waneta Neuzil; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

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Penn Foundation, a Mennonite-affiliated provider of behavioral health-care services in Sellersburg, Pa., seeks a ***CEO*** to lead its $20 million/370-employee organization. Please submit inquiries to Caryn Howell at caryn@stiffneygroup.com or 574-537-8736.

Pleasantview Home, a Mennonite-affiliated retirement community in Kalona, Iowa, seeks an ***executive director*** to lead its $5 million/135-employee organization. Please submit inquiries to Caryn Howell at caryn@stiffneygroup.com or 574-537-8736.

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Answers to the page 61 puzzle

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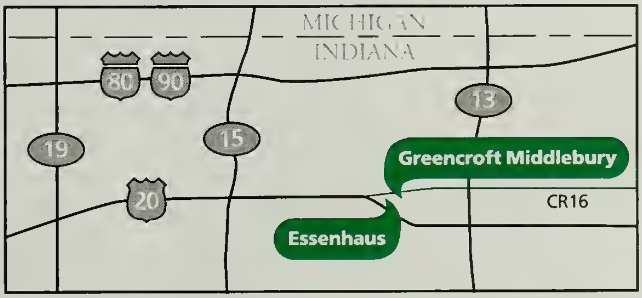

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Announcing a new baby

Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz is a member of San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Sometimes you need to calculate when you're planning on announcing it. Making a personal church announcement during the sharing and reflection time can elicit a whole range of emotions from the congregation: tears, laughter and applause.

Some announcements are held private as long as possible for fear of or concern about the community's response. Announcements naturally elicit approval or disapproval, and those sharing personal news may be reluctant if there is uncertainty about the response until it's almost absolutely necessary.

This brings me to my family's news: a new pregnancy. Yes, I'm pleased to announce that we, the Elizarraraz family, are having our fourth baby in September. I was well into my second trimester (beginning my fourth month of pregnancy) when we made the announcement, and it took strength to share our wonderful news to my Mennonite congregation. Why would it be necessary to have courage and find an appropriate way to share what would seem to be such life-giving and joyful news?

The immediate congregational response was applause. Many surprised and excited wishes came our way after the service, but a few days later, some members asked me privately if I'd received any negative or sarcastic responses. This didn't surprise me, since I thought that could be the response of a handful of members.

Our shared values can or does lead some to conclude that parents should try to limit their families to one or two children.

Our shared values of simplicity, poverty awareness and environmental awareness can or does lead some to conclude that parents should try to limit their families to one or two children—and adopting if they want more than that. However, no one questioned me and my husband for having four children in our modern times.

In other Christian denominations, individuals ask God to reveal the number of children they may or may not have with the added biblical benefit that with more children come increased blessing. My sense is that to be a young adult Mennonite in this generation, having a large family may be viewed as selfish and problematic for society, and to truly love your neighbor is to limit your family's size. However, I wonder if a large percentage of *The Mennonite* readership, those in their golden years, had families of four or more and what perspective they may have about the benefits or disadvantages of increasing the arrows in the quiver.

In his profile of Mennonite Church USA, *Road Signs for the Journey*, Conrad Kanagy addresses the numerical growth, or lack thereof, among Mennonites—in particular the differences between white and ethnic/racial Mennonites, and most noted are Latino. White Mennonites average 1.4 children, while Latino Mennonites are at 2.0.

Kanagy challenges readers to consider the "bleak future" of the denomination if this trend continues (and new membership numbers don't increase) while seeing some hope in racial/ethnic groups and their fertility rates. What challenges or blessings might this offer to a changing church in the next 25 or 50 years if Latinos like me have or desire larger families?

I do see a local concern: Our congregation has at least 17 children ages 5 and under attending Sunday services, 14 born to San Antonio Mennonite families, and three women, including myself, are currently pregnant. All this occurs in a congregation with a membership of 30 and attendance around 70. Our church is exploding with children, and I'm sure to the outsider this is amazing.

The problem with this eruption of children is greater needs and accommodations from the entire congregation, and I'm pleased with our church's creative solutions for keeping children engaged in the service. However, finding accommodations for four children when there are only two adults officially responsible for them and trying to meet each individual's needs in a service is a daunting task, to say the least.

My hope for the church is that we will come to a place where each family chooses what is best for them and that all who plan on having a family with many children or no children at all can find a home among Mennonites today. TM

FILM REVIEW

Oceans (G) is Disney's latest nature film, following last year's *Earth*. Like its predecessor, this one uses the latest in photographic technology to show amazing footage of the teeming complexity of life on our planet. It also points out that while we humans depend on the oceans for life, we are destroying this abundant, lively and life-giving environment.—*Gordon Houser*

DVD REVIEW

In **Crazy Heart** (R) Jeff Bridges impressively and effectively plays an alcoholic country singer, "Bad Blake," whose life changes when he falls for a young, single mother and her son. The film shows the amazing talent that sometimes comes from addicted and unhealthy individuals. It also acknowledges that the path to healing often requires the help of someone else.
—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS

Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre (Eerdmans, 2009, $18) reflects on what it means to be good stewards of language, "to retrieve words from the kinds of misuse, abuse and distortion to which they've been subjected of late, and to invigorate them for use as bearers of truth and as instruments of love." McEntyre sees the complex beauty of language and describes our "culture of lies," where "argument turns into banter, analysis into fatuous assertion." She delineates 12 strategies for being good stewards of language. This is an important book, particularly for pastors, who are called to care for words and tell the truth.—*gh*

Yoder books keep coming

Even though Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder died more than a dozen years ago (at age 70), books of his writings keep coming out. So, too, do books written in response to his works. One source says that 10 such books will be published this year. (I'll look at five of these.)

Although he trained primarily as an historian and taught theology, Yoder was conversant in many fields—biblical studies, ethics, sociology—and was fluent in several languages.

Perhaps his greatest gift to the church was his ability to clarify and synthesize issues in a coherent way, though reading him is no easy task.

At the same time, he resisted systematic theology and believed that theology should be written in service to the church, addressing issues as they arise. He writes: "This material was taken from the midst of work that was asked of me."

While Yoder was always a Mennonite, his work has had greater influence on those outside the Mennonite community. While he has done more than anyone else to clarify for the larger church what Mennonites believe, most Mennonites ignore him.

In an essay responding to critics of his seminal book *The Politics of Jesus*, Yoder notes that while some critics wrote him off as representing "a small and quaint European sect," he "had not studied in a Mennonite setting since the age of 19."

To Hear the Word (Cascade Books) is the second edition (with corrections and new essays) of a 2001 book that Yoder finished just before his death. It distills his commitment to the Bible as formative and to the need for figuring out what it said to its original audience.

The War of the Lamb: The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking, edited by Glen Stassen, Mark Thiessen Nation and Matt Hamsher (Brazos Press), was planned by Yoder before his death.

Yoder's arguments on behalf of faithfulness rather than effectiveness have led many to say he ignored the latter. This book helps dispel that notion. In one essay, "The Political Meaning of Hope," he writes, "[Nonviolence] is right because it goes with the grain of the universe, and that is why *in the long run* nothing else will work."

The relevance of nonviolent thought and action is reinforced in *Nonviolence—A Brief History: The Warsaw Lectures* (Baylor University Press). These lectures, presented in 1983 in Warsaw, Poland, argue for the promise of nonviolent action. He looks at the lessons of Tolstoy, Gandhi and King and shows that "the just war tradition has never been appropriately applied, despite the fact that the concept has generally been approved by the church."

Two books include essays by writers from various disciplines who respond to Yoder's ideas. *The New Yoder*, edited by Peter Dula and Chris K. Huebner (Cascade Books), brings a new approach to Yoder. Dula and Huebner write that "new Yoder essays … read him as challenging categories themselves instead of just taking up a position within the given categories."

Radical Ecumenicity: Pursuing Unity and Continuity After John Howard Yoder, edited by John C. Nugent (Abilene Christian University Press), collects papers from a 2009 meeting of representatives of the Stone-Campbell Movement and others, plus two essays by Yoder. The essays look at Yoder's emphasis on ecumenical relations from a variety of angles. They agree with Yoder that Christians are to "maintain brotherly relationships with anyone who confesses Christ."

These books reaffirm how valuable Yoder's insights are for our churches. Pastors and other Mennonite members have much to gain from studying his work. TM

APRIL 2010 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

THE LIFE AND JOURNEYS OF PAUL

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Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Roelif Badertscher, Goshen, Ind.
Jay Bechtel, Valparaiso, Ind.
Alice Berkey, Molalla, Ore.
Carrol H. Birky, Denver, Colo.
Michele Bollman, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Oleta Bollman, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Beth Bontrager, Moundridge, Kan.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Mark Boshart, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Ruth Bowman, Columbiana, Ohio
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
Andy Brenneman, Lima, Ohio
Ellenor Brenneman, Rocky Ford, Colo.
Ed & Carol Burkholder, Elkhart, Ind.
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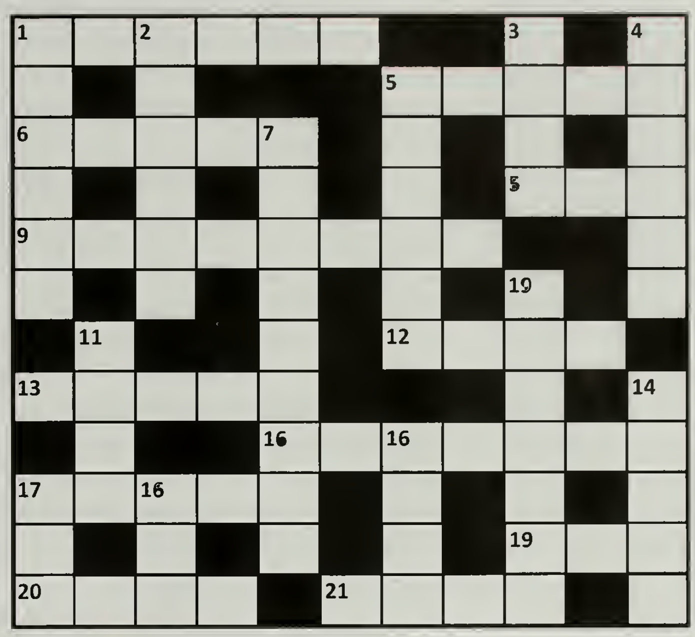
A Study of 1 Samuel

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version of 1 Samuel unless otherwise noted.

ACROSS
1. Hannah prayed for a son at this city.
5. David tells Saul, "May the Lord ____ between you and me ..." (Ch. 24).
6. Older daughter of Saul, promised to the man who killed Goliath.
8. Saul determined by casting the ___ that Jonathan had disobeyed and tasted food (Ch. 14).
9. The place where the Ark of the Covenant was captured.
12. The young David told Saul that he could seize a lion or bear by its ____ and kill it. (Ch. 17).
13. Birthplace, home, and burial place of Samuel.
15. Hannah's husband.
17. David's tall, handsome, older brother (Ch. 16).
19. Father of Abner and an uncle to Saul (Ch. 14).
20. The point of Goliath's spear was made of this.
21. Saul was told to kill this Amelekite king but did not.

DOWN
1. He anointed Saul as king.
2. This nation pleaded for a king.
3. Michal put this item in David's bed to fool Saul's soldiers into thinking he was ill (Ch. 19).
4. "To obey is ____ than sacrifice."(Ch. 15).
5. Saul rescued the town of ____ Gilead from the Ammonites (Ch. 11).
7. "And all Israel from Dan to ____ recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord." (Ch 3).
10. "Look, the men are ____ against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it." (Ch. 14)
11. He committed suicide by falling on his own sword the same day his sons were killed.
14. David made it law that "All will ____ alike," from the men who stayed with the supplies to the men who fought in battle. (30:24).
16. The people of Israel asked for a ___ .
17. He thought Hannah was drunk.
18. David asked the Lord, "Shall __ ___ and attack these Philistines?" (2 words) (Ch. 23).

**Beginning this month,
we will now publish the answers
to crossword puzzles
in the same issues.
See page 56 for the June answers.**

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our August 2010 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

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(continued from page 5)

tion of some symbolic amount ($10.40) to healing programs is not that risky.

There is a financial penalty added to what is owed to IRS. But after a series of computer-generated warning letters, the IRS takes what was redirected from bank accounts or deducts it from Social Security payments.

We are fortunate to live in a nation with a Bill of Rights that applies even to people who openly and lovingly practice civil disobedience for conscience reasons.

Our descendants and overseas Christians will wonder how Christians in a superpower, with over 700 military bases around the world, fighting two wars and considering a third with Iran, supporting covert wars in places such as Colombia and Israel, could be so at peace with war.

"The church should consist of communities of loving defiance. Instead, it consists largely of comfortable clubs of conformity," writes Ron Sider in *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. If we teach it is wrong, why do we support it financially?

Shame is the negative motivation. The positive is that Jesus promised his spirit of truth would abide in us and enable us to live differently from the world's ways. If we love him, we are empowered to keep his commandments (John 14:15-17).

War tax redirection is "alternative service" for dollars we earn, service that provides hope and new possibilities for suffering people instead of endless war.

For more information about war tax redirection and congregational support as a way of not being "at peace with war" contact any of us below.—*Susan Balzer (susanbalzer@gmail.com),*
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Anita and Stan Bohn
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Anabaptism supports use of force

While I wholeheartedly agree with the concern of the April editorial, "At Peace With War," I was frustrated by the line of Everett Thomas' argument. "Why are Mennonites not resisting the current wars?" he asks, then lists five possible reasons.

I am one of those Mennonites who is not resisting our current wars. But I did not find any of my reasons in Thomas' list. My reasons are essentially two:

First, I still have a two-kingdom theology. As Michael Sattler wrote in the Schleitheim Confession, the sword is ordained by God "to be used by worldly magistrates" to protect the innocent and punish the lawbreakers, but the use of the sword is "outside the perfection of Christ" and therefore is not to be used by Christians.

The early Anabaptists did not protest when states went to war; they protested when they were forced to participate in those wars. Classical Anabaptism recognizes that the use of force has practical and legitimate uses and is indeed needed for the ordering of general society. The task of Christians is to band together to create an alternative, sword-free community based on the Spirit of Christ. But this community cannot be the same as society in general, since it is voluntary and faith-based, and so the two kingdoms must continue to operate from different ethical principles and allegiances.

Second, ending a war is different from starting a war. I vigorously protested before these wars began. I saw them (and still see them) as immoral and unnecessary. But now that the wars have been fully engaged, how do we best end them? I recently watched Bill Moyers interview Greg Mortenson, the author of *Three Cups of Tea*, who practices bringing peace and healing to Afghanistan and neighboring countries by building schools and working with the local elders. Mortenson supports the surge in troops because, as he says, more soldiers need to be on the ground, making connections with the villagers, building peace. Mennonites have a knee-jerk, simplistic reaction to all soldiers no matter what they are doing. But what if that troop surge is actually building peace?—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

On playing the national anthem

I am a sports fan. Why is the national anthem played before sporting events ("Goshen College to Play National Anthem," March)? Why not play it before a school play or a concert?

I have been attending games for 50 years and listening to the anthem. It has not changed my mind on who comes first, God or country. If you think it might, maybe you shouldn't go.—*Terry Hartman, Elkhart, Ind.*

We are blurring the lines

Inclusiveness has become the all-important custom to tout. Known for its pacifistic beliefs, Goshen (Ind.) College has made national headlines for its playing of the national anthem at sporting events ("Goshen College to Play National Anthem," March).

Although I recognize the need to present the gospel of Jesus Christ in meaningful terms to all people without altering the core, at what cost are we Mennonites willing to sacrifice our Anabaptism on the altar of inclusivity?

More and more there is a blurring of the lines of demarcation that make the Mennonite faith unique. Why do some distinguish themselves as Mennonites by name, yet speak and act as any other garden-variety Christian?

Let us ponder how we might love and live the gospel without compromising its message to suit the masses.
—Doug Yoder, Bunker Hill, Ind.

First things first Remove the plank in your own eye

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in someone else's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye.
—Matthew 7:5 TNIV

It can be painful to notice a problem with someone's eyes; my own eyes easily water in sympathy. Who wouldn't quickly volunteer to help if it could make a difference for a brother or sister with an obvious eye problem? Whether it be a speck or plank needing to be removed, I would surely want to help. Yet Jesus warns that obstacles to our own vision hinder our ability to help others.

Jesus used this figure of speech to speak of the way we naturally try to correct other's moral or spiritual problems. All across our nation, Christians are attempting to do what Jesus warned against, hoping to correct the vision of fellow Christians. We have become polarized, raising shrill voices in judgment against those on the opposite "side" of a number of social issues. Even Mennonite congregations at times reflect this shrill tone toward church members affiliated with a different political party.

We have become polarized, raising shrill voices in judgment against those on the opposite "side" of a number of social issues.

I'm particularly concerned about the way we conduct churchwide meetings with large and diverse groups of people. As may be expected, many of us come eager to point out the shortcomings of those who disagree with us on certain social issues. We are convinced that it is our Christian duty to remove the specks that limit our fellow Christian's vision.

It can be painful to belong to a fellowship in which others don't see eye to eye with us on things that matter. It is frustrating when people resist our attempts to make things right in the church. We can easily leave such meetings disappointed and angry. We may even vow never to return. It seems far more satisfying to be at meetings where our deepest beliefs are confirmed, our commitments are applauded and our egos are stroked. Yet we must ask ourselves, How is this working for our church? What might Jesus have to say in this situation?

Upon reflection, I have come to see that some of the times of greatest growth in my life took place at meetings where I saw my sinfulness and the limits of my own vision. Ironically, these experiences came about, not because someone was forcibly trying to remove a speck from my eye but when I saw others remove the planks from their own eyes. Nothing has been more spiritually motivating for me than to see mature Christians confessing their sins and faults to one another, inviting others to help them gain clearer vision.

Perhaps that is why James instructs the believers: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (5:16).

That is why I long for church gatherings in which we can each feel safe enough to confess our own sins, whether in public or in private. It can be a place of healing in the church.

I long for every worship gathering of Mennonite Church USA to be a place where each person can gain a greater vision of God's glory, love and grace. Further, I hope that worship can lead each participant to respond to God's initiative by removing any obstacles that cloud their vision of God or others. May God enable it to be so. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Comments worth printing

Anna Groff

The tagline on the cover of *The Mennonite* reads, "a forum for the voices of Mennonite Church USA." Over my four years as assistant editor, I have seen how offering content online and inviting reader feedback works to carry out that mission.

As a church we are called to value the input of all voices and offer opportunities for people to share experiences, raise concerns and engage in dialogue. This process often means meeting people where they are—a concept also applied to journalism these days.

Rather than a reporter only sending messages through what they report on, the journalistic process now acts as a two-way street. We try to meet people where they are through experimenting with social networking. As I learned in a Poynter Institute online seminar, social networking allows reporters and readers to interact on Web sites such as Facebook and Twitter, where readers already spend their time. These sites provide a place for readers to give feedback on content, ask questions and even create an online community among readers.

We are now consider publishing a selection of Facebook responses in the print version of *The Mennonite.*

When I began my position, I saw Facebook as a short-term, passing fad. I was skeptical of managing a Facebook fan page for *The Mennonite*. However, our readers respond to the articles I place on Facebook more than anywhere else. Fortunately, these users model the type of safe space for a forum that we strive for in other areas of the church. Most of our users who anonymously post comments online exercise respect and restraint.

This is not the case for many publications. According to William Grueskin of Columbia's journalism school, while the ability to make anonymous postings has value, "a lot of comment boards turn into the equivalent of a barroom brawl, with ... participants having blood-alcohol levels of 0.1 or higher. People who might have something useful to say are less willing to participate ... where the tomatoes are being thrown."

Our readers post such thoughtful comments, we are now considering publishing a selection in the print version of *The Mennonite*—as *Newsweek* and some newspapers have begun doing. This could further connect our online readers and print readers and extend the forum.

Facebook's credibility may slip, and it may be replaced, but we are in the business of experimenting with anything affordable that offers our content to the widest audience of readers, connects us to those readers and creates forums for them to interact with content and each other.

Despite the buzz around social networking, our print magazine redesign also presented an invigorating update for me. I'm not alone in my enthusiasm; we also saw an increase in the number of people subscribing to *The Mennonite* over a three-month period. Readers and writers elevate the value of the printed page over online material, too. At times, when we tell a writer we prefer to run their article online instead of the print magazine, they respond with disappointment, and that's understandable. However, we often select the media that reaches the most readers in the least amount of time, especially for time-sensitive stories.

Six years ago, as a student at Goshen (Ind.) College, I wrote this in an article published in the Feb. 1, 2005, issue of *The Mennonite*: "I hope to [serve] by giving a voice to the voiceless and providing a way to bring connections in a church community."

To my pleasant surprise in 2010, online forums like Facebook function as one step toward that goal.—*ag*

Editor's note: The address of our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/TheMennonite

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- The peace church as worship of God
- The 'bare essentials' of Anabaptism
- So you wanna be a Mennonite
- Pivotal times
- Island of lost souls
- Editorial: Boycott Arizona?

Mennonite
Church
USA

Building campaign FAQs

1 What progress has been made in the campaign?

The total goal for the campaign is $12.5 million. To date, $10.4 million has been given/committed.

Of that total, $4.6 million is progress toward our goal for the building. That is our current focus. We would like to raise $2.1 million to complete the building and avoid borrowing.

For the past three years, $5.8 million of the $10.4 million in cash and commitments received have been used for current and future programs, not facilities.

- $150,000 grant to Global Mission Fellowship for equipping Mennonite World Conference-related churches for mission.
- $300,000 for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership ministries.
- $5.35 million for Mennonite Mission Network ministries.

2 Is new construction necessary? Isn't renovation cheaper?

Initially, it could be 10–30 percent less expensive to renovate an existing structure. Over 15 years, the cash outlay is similar and the asset value is less.

Any renovation is a compromise version of the desired facility characteristics for location, space utilization, and maintenance costs. We will also build in an environmentally sustainable way, seeking to obtain a LEED Gold standard.

Continuing to lease and maintain our current temporary space costs $265,000/year ($85,000 more than our previous location) and gives us no long-term guarantee of occupancy.

An existing building would not benefit from being next to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

3 Why are we building in Elkhart rather than an urban center?

The location of churchwide offices was the subject of a denominational task group as part of the creation of Mennonite Church USA. The task group recommended that one regional office be located in Elkhart, eventually at AMBS. This proposal was affirmed by the Executive Board in April 2001 and reported to the delegates at Nashville 2001. It was reaffirmed by Executive Board in 2003 and has been revisited and affirmed a number of times by a variety of groups over the last six years. The task group determined the regional locations based on 20 values, including accessibility to conferences and congregations, continuity of staffing, economic feasibility, and more.

There are many Mennonite Church USA congregations within easy driving distance of Elkhart. Interns are available from Goshen College and AMBS and denominational staff members are often invited as guest speakers and lecturers. Elkhart also has a low cost of living.

Mennonite Church USA agencies that will occupy the building have programs, staff members and volunteers in a number of urban areas around the United States including Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles and San Antonio. As congregations in urban areas continue to grow, we will continue making intentional decisions to add additional dispersed staff to those areas and we will depend on logistical bases like the one in Elkhart to support their ministries.

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Investing in **hope.**

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The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Arizona law is racist harassment

Everyone should be concerned about the new immigration law in Arizona, no matter what one's stance on the issue of immigration is. Allowing the police to stop people who appear to be immigrants is simply going to encourage racial profiling, a form of racist harassment. You cannot tell by looking at a person whether that person is an immigrant (either documented or undocumented) or a citizen.

I lived in Elkhart, Ind., in the late 1990s and saw firsthand how this happened. After a raid on a factory, an American citizen had been detained until he could prove his citizenship, although he was born in the United States. I, on the other hand, with my F1 student visa, never bothered to carry my passport. I knew I would not be asked to prove my right to be in the country because I am Caucasian, and English is my first language.

With this new law, the police will be targeting anyone who is or who looks Hispanic. That makes Arizona unsafe for many people who have every legal right to feel safe there.

The issue of immigration is complex; it probably requires some new laws and new ways of doing things to address the challenges of the times. The new law in Arizona doesn't fix anything, but it risks creating a new set of problems. It may end up costing the state a great deal if it leads to lawsuits, as it might well do. I encourage everyone to take issue with the law and encourage change.*—Nancy Frey, Brookline, Mass.*

Prayer vigil at wrong church

I just looked through the June issue of *The Mennonite*, and it is impressive: I was struck by the good quality photos and at the multicultural nature of it. Articles about Hispanics, Anglos, Vietnamese. I thought of what a tremendous change it is from what the Mennonite church in the United States looked like 20-30 years ago. There really is a place for all people in this community. Keep up the good work.

I noticed one mistake. With the photo of Kendel, Bek, Gilberto and myself praying, the caption says that it took place at North Goshen Mennonite Church ("Praying for Immigrants," News Briefs). It took place at Iglesia Menonite del Buen Pastor in Goshen. There might be some who are sensitive to that, so I wanted to draw your attention to it. But I stick with my words, "Keep up the good work."*—Dean A. Linsenmeyer, Goshen, Ind.*

Connections to Nicholas Stoltzfus

Regarding "Cookies for Nicholas" (May): I was struck by the name of this baby that died so early. There is a major historic connection, as Nicholas Stoltzfus was the person to which all Stoltzfus Mennonites can trace their ancestry. He was a Lutheran farmer who "converted" to Anabaptism in Europe.

This is not to take away from the story that Kate tells, yet since this article (a beautiful piece) was written in honor of a Nicholas Stoltzfus, it seemed fitting somehow to recognize the transgeneration connection. The Stoltzfus family (and many families that connect to them through marriage and acquaintance) have been influential, prophetic and steady in the Mennonite church throughout generations.

Perhaps in some way we can all eat cookies, enjoy religious freedom and live life more deeply in memory of both the historic and more contemporary Nicholas Stoltzfus.—*Sarah Thompson, Elkhart, Ind.*

Not buildings and bureaucracy

Our house church congregation was blessed by Isaac Villegas's article "I Believe in the Holy Spirit" in the May issue. It makes clear that the church born at Pentecost was not focused on buildings and bureaucracy but on the basics of prayer, fellowship, teaching and hospitality to strangers.—*Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Reverse anthem decision

In the May issue, Joe Leichty defends Goshen (Ind.) College's decision to play the national anthem by saying, "The anthem does not have a fixed meaning." But even Joe must admit that the national anthem is a symbol of America and American civil religion, not of the kingdom of God or of Christian faith. And it can hardly be denied that America devotes tremendous resources to war, invasion and military preparations. American civil religion justifies these national policies as ordained and approved by God.

But Goshen College was created and is supported by the Mennonite church, which has opposed violence and proclaimed peace through Christ for centuries. The church is an outpost of the kingdom of God, in which we strive to resolve disputes peacefully and regard our enemies with care and concern. The absence of the national anthem in Mennonite churches and institutions is a 100-year-old theological tradition closely related to the priority of the kingdom of God in Anabaptist faith and practice. To simply abandon this tradition is not a "reasonable request."

By both playing the national anthem and saying the Prayer of St Francis, Goshen College proclaims a message that is unclear, uncertain and indecisive. In contrast, the church yearns for leaders and institutions that are clearly committed to Anabaptist faith and proclaim it in a simple, direct and joyful way. Our call from God is to practice the values of the kingdom of God, not a confusing mixture of patriotism and piety.

I urge the administrative council as well as the board of directors of Goshen College to reverse the decision to play the anthem and to review and strengthen the Anabaptist theological convictions for which the college was founded and to which the college has long been committed.—*Roger Farmer, Washington, Iowa*

Fifty years of appreciation

I grew up in Kennett Square, Pa. My family was one of the first black families to go to the Mennonite church there. My father was baptized there. Wilber Engles was the preacher. I remember brothers Zook, brother King, brother Calhoun. That was over 50 years ago. I never forgot the love I felt in that little church. How does an old lady find and relive a childhood memory again?—*Margaret Thomas, Denver*

Connecting families

My spouse and I attended the 21st annual retreat of Connecting Families April 9-11 in Maryland. We found the program inspiring and rich in hope. Stories of joy coming out of personal pain warmed our hearts. Several retreat participants reported having sought help from Christian-oriented "reparative therapies" that left them unhealed and unfulfilled.

Connecting Families first met in 1990, after several Mennonite couples recognized a need for mutual support in dealing with issues relating to same-gender attraction. We first attended several years later, at a low point in our lives after a family member informed us that she was lesbian. That weekend

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

If there was enough space, the title of the cover story could say, "Love and sex, yes. Marriage, not so much." The article, written by Sandra Fribley, addresses a trend in the church we have been reluctant to discuss (page 12). "The notion of celibacy before marriage has largely been abandoned, even by church-going adults," Fribley says.

As our country celebrates the Fourth of July, we publish several articles that reinforce our peace church tradition. These include a 3,300-word treatise by J. Denny Weaver entitled "The Peace Church as Worship of God" (page 17).

The essence of "being Mennonite" is the focus of Karl Landis' article by that name (page 26). "Because most of those who have carried the Mennonite torch for so long in the eastern United States have been Swiss-Germans," Landis writes, "our particular incarnation of Mennonite values came to be confused with what it means to be Mennonite." On a lighter note, Joanna Harader (page 29) offers some suggestions about how to be hospitable to new Mennonites. Her first suggestion: "Double-check the spelling of my last name and ask me how to pronounce it (Hair-u-der)."

Original news reporting includes assistant editor Anna Groff's June 7 visit to the Gulf coast to interview people affected by the nation's worst oil spill (pages 38-39). Groff also reports on the Executive Board's June 10-12 meeting in Kalona, Iowa.

Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, was detained at the Newark International Airport on April 27. Even though the entire terminal was cleared because of his laptop computer, Green never received a plausible explanation for the detention. Perhaps it was an example of the way some immigrants are treated when they are victims of racial profiling (page 40).—*Editor*

Addicted to radio preaching

Ron Adams is a pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I am embarrassed to admit this. But I am addicted to radio preaching: James McDonald, Chuck Swindoll, Tony Evans, David Jeremiah.

My friends worry about me. I know they mean well. I know my addiction feeds my cynicism about the fundamentalist wing of the church. Still, I listen.

Part of my attraction is that these men are talented preachers. They have a clarity of vision that communicates well. They are good storytellers. They bring great energy and power into the pulpit. And, from a purely human perspective, they are all far more successful than I am.

The mass appeal of these preachers is their readiness to speak in the voice of God. I don't mean preaching on a biblical text in which God speaks. I mean speaking as if they actually have an inside line on what God is thinking and doing. They often speak with the authority of God, as if God were being channeled through their voices and their agendas.

Tony Evans regularly describes God as the author of the biblical text. Paul did not write Romans, God did. And here is what God says. This interpretive move makes it impossible to engage the text in any other way than unquestioning obedience. God says it, I believe it, that settles it.

James McDonald routinely calls his congregation to repeat his words as if they were God's own. He knows exactly what the Scripture says and exactly what God means by it, and anyone who disagrees is falling short of the mark. God said it to me, don't argue, get in line.

If we simply allow some charismatic preacher to do our thinking for us, we forego any deep engagement with the Scriptures and the Spirit who inspired them.

Now my blood pressure goes up as I listen to these men wrap themselves in God's own clothes and speak with a confidence bordering on the blasphemous. That's harsh, I know. But I am reminded of Jesus' words about those to whom much has been given. They have a lot to live up to, because their failure to do right can lead others astray.

When we proclaim that God wrote the Bible, making the human writers mere recorders, we lose access to the text. We can wrestle with Paul or try to make sense of Ezekiel, with the same degree of give-and-take we'd have in conversation with a friend. But who can argue or debate with God? By eliminating the human authors from the equation, these preachers short-circuit our engagement with the Bible.

Worse, by speaking as if they have a direct line to God, these men claim an authority over our lives that is, frankly, scary. They have the truth. All we need do is parrot back their words and otherwise keep silent.

Thousands listen and believe what they hear from these preachers. They may do so because in uncertain times people like to know that God is still speaking. And these preachers make that claim every time they speak. There is comfort in that.

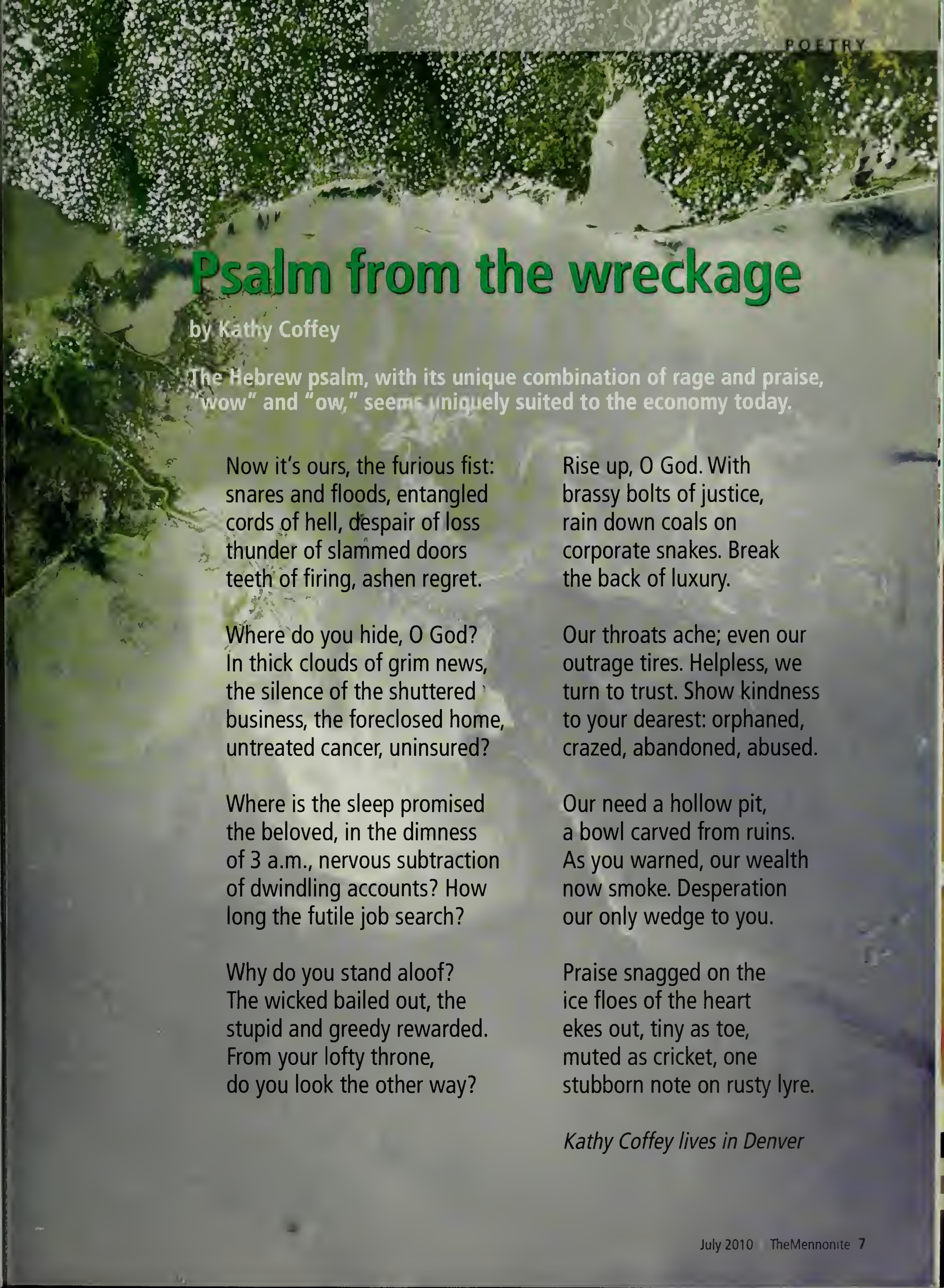
But there is also great risk. If power does corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, we sheep must be wary of following after any voice that claims to be divinely authoritative.

I believe we are called, in Paul's words, to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. This means that following Jesus requires a lot of struggle and sweat and tears. It means listening for the voice of God and then testing what we've heard with our sisters and brothers in Christ. If we simply allow some charismatic preacher to do our thinking for us, we forego any deep engagement with the Scriptures and the Spirit who inspired them.

So I listen to these brothers perform their oratorical magic and I worry. Not because what they say is necessarily wrong or unfaithful. Sometimes I agree with what I hear. But I worry because the way they preach precludes our need to read and study and listen for ourselves.

Call me an Anabaptist, but I believe Christian discipleship includes doing my own reading, studying and listening in the company of sisters and brothers. There is more to following Jesus than sitting by the radio and trusting that the preacher has it right.

But don't take my word for it. You can look it up. TM



Psalm from the wreckage

by Kathy Coffey

The Hebrew psalm, with its unique combination of rage and praise, "wow" and "ow," seems uniquely suited to the economy today.

Now it's ours, the furious fist:
snares and floods, entangled
cords of hell, despair of loss
thunder of slammed doors
teeth of firing, ashen regret.

Where do you hide, O God?
In thick clouds of grim news,
the silence of the shuttered
business, the foreclosed home,
untreated cancer, uninsured?

Where is the sleep promised
the beloved, in the dimness
of 3 a.m., nervous subtraction
of dwindling accounts? How
long the futile job search?

Why do you stand aloof?
The wicked bailed out, the
stupid and greedy rewarded.
From your lofty throne,
do you look the other way?

Rise up, O God. With
brassy bolts of justice,
rain down coals on
corporate snakes. Break
the back of luxury.

Our throats ache; even our
outrage tires. Helpless, we
turn to trust. Show kindness
to your dearest: orphaned,
crazed, abandoned, abused.

Our need a hollow pit,
a bowl carved from ruins.
As you warned, our wealth
now smoke. Desperation
our only wedge to you.

Praise snagged on the
ice floes of the heart
ekes out, tiny as toe,
muted as cricket, one
stubborn note on rusty lyre.

Kathy Coffey lives in Denver

No dearth of pastors now

GOSHEN, Ind.— In November 2008, there were 99 openings for pastors in Mennonite Church USA congregations, 51 full-time. But 18 months later there were only 70 positions available with 29 positions being full time. As the number of openings declined, the number of candidates increased on Mennonite Church USA's national register. In November 2008, 30 candidates were registered. As of May, that number more than doubled to 64, says Lee Lever, director of denominational ministry for Mennonite Church USA.

The trend is similar to what is happening in other Christian denominations.

"After a decade-long clergy shortage in America's pulpits, Christian denominations are now experiencing a clergy glut—with some denominations reporting two ministers for every vacant pulpit," said Greg Warner in a May 17 Religion News Service report. Warner said the sudden turnaround was caused by the bad economy.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Tucson church wears ribbons to protest law

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Members of Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Ariz., are asking Mennonites across the country to join them in wearing red ribbon pins.

This request was in a letter from members and friends of Shalom that was included in the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference e-update.

The letter says this ribbon symbolizes their care for all immigrants as well as their resistance to the "errors in [Arizona Senate Bill 1070]," Arizona's new immigration law. The members also made a call to prayer.

The letter says: "Immigration is not just an issue here in Tucson or across Arizona. It has ramifications in every state and almost all cities. We urge you to approach immigration as a national issue and to find ways to work in your own congregation to advocate for immigration reform."—*Anna Groff*

Byler named MCC U.S. transitional director

AKRON, Pa.—The board of directors of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. has named J. Ron Byler the organization's transitional executive director. He succeeds Rolando Santiago, who has resigned as of August, when his six-year term ends.

For the next three years, Byler, of Goshen, Ind., will lead MCC U.S. while a long-term executive director is sought. He will help guide MCC U.S. through New Wineskins, an MCC-wide restructuring process.

In addition, Byler will oversee all MCC programs in the United States. He will coordinate four regional offices, as well as the Washington Office and the Akron-based national peace and justice staff. He will continue the priority of working closely with the supporting church denominations of MCC U.S.

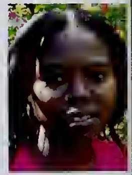
During the past 13 years, Byler worked in leadership roles in Mennonite Church USA and one of its predecessors. Most recently he was interim executive director for Mennonite Church USA.—*MCC U.S.*

Photo provided

Good dump

Fifteen Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School students began a composting program at the school that is demonstrating the value and "how to" of composting as it decreases the trash stream and adds nutrient-rich humus to the school's topsoil. LMH senior Christine Baer started the project; plans are for the project to continue next year. Pictured are junior Curtis Ranck, left, and Baer adding food scraps and biodegradable napkins to a compost bin at the school. The student-led composting project started this spring. —*LMH*

YAMEN! participant dies



STRASBOURG, France—Sithabile Ndlovu, a 2008-09 YAMEN! participant from Zimbabwe, died suddenly on May 9 in Johannesburg, South Africa, after a brief illness. She had been admitted to the hospital the previous night. Ndlovu completed her year-long YAMEN! term in Bolivia last August. The Pumula Brethren in Christ Church in Bulawayo, a Mennonite World Conference-member church she attended for 15 years, was her sending church. YAMEN! (Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network) is a joint MWC and Mennonite Central Committee South-to-South exchange for single young people aged 18 to 30. In Bolivia, Ndlovu worked with Centro Menno programs in Santa Cruz, which provide services to Low German-speaking Mennonites who live in surrounding rural areas.—*MWC*

BP hears from MMA

GOSHEN, Ind.—Three weeks after the explosion that sank BP's contracted drilling rig, MMA Praxis Mutual Fund's full investment team met by phone with the Head of Social Policy and Sustainability in BP's London office to receive an update on the company's efforts in the Gulf and to express MMA Praxis' concerns about what led to and will follow this disaster.

"Connecting directly to senior management in times like this is a critical part of our stewardship investing commitment," said Chad Horning, MMA chief investment officer. "It's important to engage management when we see things that trouble us, using our role as investors to encourage changes that are good for people, the planet and the company's long-term viability."

MMA Praxis has been a long-time investor in BP, staying with the company through a number of troubling incidents, including an oil-pipeline spill on Alaska's North Slope and an explosion at the company's Texas City refinery that claimed 15 lives.—*MMA*

Young adult bikes for MDS and Hesston College

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Neal Friesen began a six-month bicycle trip, "Cycle MDS," on May 31. Friesen planned the trip to benefit Mennonite Disaster Service and the Hesston (Kan.) College Disaster Management Scholarship fund.

The trip began in New Iberia, La.—near the Mennonite Disaster Service site and will cover 48 states and some of Canada. Friesen left his position as resident director at Hesston on May 21. To follow Neal, go to www.cycleMDS.org.—*Anna Groff*

Farewell to Mennonite Men coordinator

NEWTON, Kan.—Workers at Mennonite Church USA offices in Newton said farewell May 25 to Jim Gingerich, who served more than 12 years as coordinator of Mennonite Men, an organization of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Also on hand was Don Schmidt of Newton, who served eight years as president of the Mennonite Men board. He commended Gingerich's strong faith, upbeat attitude, good organization and ability to delegate. He also pointed out that during Gingerich's tenure, JoinHands, the church-building program of Mennonite Men, increased its giving base and raised more than $1 million to help young churches with building programs.

Current board chair Arlen Godshall of Phoenix and Canadian Mennonite Men coordinator Marv Baergen sent greetings, as did former board member Lowell Detweiler, who wrote that Gingerich's "background in ministry and knowledge of the Mennonite church was just what was needed to move [Mennonite Men] from youth to middle age." Don Yoder begins June 1 as the new coordinator for Mennonite Men.
—*Gordon Houser*

Kris Brenneman

Iowa Mennonite School students cheer cooks

Students at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, raised money to show appreciation for the good job and great food Sherry Schrock and Pam Miller provide every day. On April 22, the entire school created a tunnel, told the cooks to take the day off and presented them with money for lunch and a pedicure.—*IMS*

Metzger next general secretary of MC Canada

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada has announced the appointment of Willard Metzger to the post of general secretary. He will succeed outgoing general secretary Robert (Jack) Suderman, who served in the post since 2005 and will retire this summer. Metzger is the outgoing chair of Mennonite Church Canada's Witness Council, the mission and outreach ministry of the national church. Metzger has also been a pastor in Mennonite congregations for 18 years, and most recently was director of church relations for World Vision Canada.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Adults personalize Bibles for children

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Members at Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship, Boise, Idaho, wanted to give Bibles to their first graders as gifts, so they selected *The Bible for Children* from Good Books. However, they hoped to personalize the Bibles further, says member Beth Landis, chair of the leadership team at Hyde Park. So for one month the Bibles were kept in the back of the church and members signed their name beside their favorite Bible story and added a comment or thought if they wished.

On May 2, during the church service, the children received their Bibles. Since this was the first time, they gave Bibles to kindergarten through fourth-graders. Next, Hyde Park will give Bibles to their high school students. This time members will sign their name by their favorite Bible verses instead of stories.

The idea came from Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., where Beth Landis' sister, Lois Oyer, attends.—*Anna Groff*

Our addiction to cheap energy helps us ignore the lessons from oil spills

Will the Deepwater Horizon disaster have a major effect on our search for oil, or will our addiction to cheap energy cloud our memory of this environmental mess? In "How Quickly We Forget" (*Newsweek*, May 17), Sharon Begley says, Don't count on it having much effect.

She looks back at previous disasters, including the *Exxon Valdez* accident on March 24, 1989, which spilled 10.9 million gallons of crude, making it the worst oil spill in U.S. waters, though that may change with this latest one.

"The legacy of environmental catastrophes," she writes, is "a hybrid of amnesia and habituation." In other words, "the public forgets more quickly now than in the past, and understands that no source of energy is risk-free."

One could call it the cry-wolf effect, except the wolf actually came, and still we forget. Begley says this may reflect "a radical shift in what environmental risks we are willing to tolerate." The millions of dead seabirds and the devastated gulf shrimp, tuna, crab and other fisheries no longer seem to matter that much to those living outside the area immediately affected by the spill.

"The rise of alcoholism, suicide and domestic violence in the Alaskan towns hardest hit by the *Valdez* spill had no effect—none—on the enthusiasm for drilling, even in Alaska," Begley writes. "The deaths of an estimated 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbor seals, 250 bald eagles and a dozen killer whales was little more than a speed bump for oil development."

And the oil industry finds ways around attempts to rein in its drilling goals. After the *Valdez* accident, Congress passed the Oil Pollution Act, which mandated double hulls for large oil tankers, but the industry got the phase-in delayed until 2015.

Begley quotes Jeffrey Short, who was part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration team that worked on the *Valdez* spill and is now Pacific science director for the environmental group Oceana: "For people for whom all there is to life is commuting in their SUV to their job and then sitting in front of an electronic screen and watching a figment of reality, I suspect the impact [of the gulf oil spill] would not be very great for quite some time."

For millions of us, whether we oppose or support offshore drilling, we still want to go on driving our cars and living as we have. And while the photos of dead wildlife may disturb us, most of us will go on with our lives and may soon forget about this disaster.

This begs the question, What will make us address our addiction to oil?—*Gordon Houser*

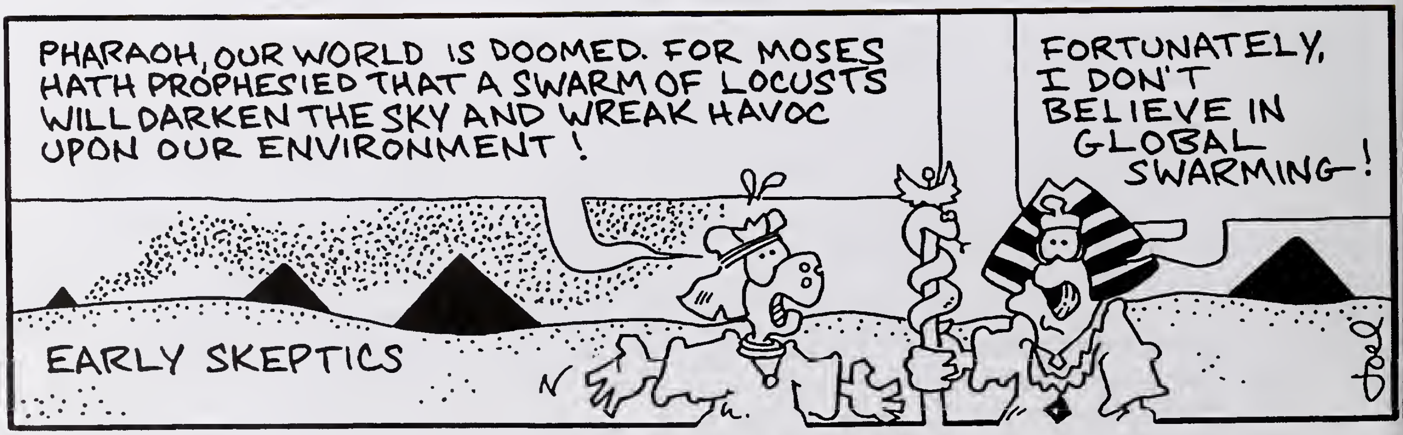
Misplaced fears

- Children abducted by strangers (1999): **115**
- Children who drown in pools (2006): **288**
- Americans killed by terrorist attacks around the world (2008): **33**
- Americans who die from seasonal flu: **36,171**
- Women who die from breast cancer (2009): **40,170**
- Women who die from cardiovascular disease (2006): **432,709**
- Fatal airline accidents (2005): **321**
- Fatal car crashes (2008): **34,017**

—*Newsweek*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


PHARAOH, OUR WORLD IS DOOMED. FOR MOSES HATH PROPHESIED THAT A SWARM OF LOCUSTS WILL DARKEN THE SKY AND WREAK HAVOC UPON OUR ENVIRONMENT!
FORTUNATELY, I DON'T BELIEVE IN GLOBAL SWARMING!
EARLY SKEPTICS
Joel

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “A man who had come to evangelize the Holy Mountain … asked [a wise and kind monk] if Jesus Christ was ‘his personal savior.’ ‘No,’ the smiling monk said without hesitation, ‘I like to share him.’” —*Scott Cairns in* The Christian Century

Denomination refuses to let church leave

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has refused to let a Florida congregation leave the synod over theological differences. Members of St. Peter Lutheran Church voted twice unanimously to leave the denomination. The last official step in the process was for the regional synod to approve the move, but the Florida-Bahamas Synod refused the request, saying the church is in a key spot for missions. St. Peter moved on without approval and joined Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.—*Christianity Today*

The digital age marches on

Wendy McFadden writes, citing Jeffrey Cole, Digital Center director at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communications: “Here are some … descriptions of the lives of your people ages 12 to 24: They will never read a newspaper. They will never own a landline (and maybe not a watch). They will not watch TV on someone else’s schedule. They trust unknown peers more than experts. The have little interest in the source of the information, and most information is aggregated. They will soon access everything on mobile devices. … They think email is for their parents. They want to be heard (as evidenced by all that user-generated content).”—*Messenger*

Facebook usage

- Total minutes spent on Facebook in the United States in April 2008: **1.7 billion**
- In April 2009: **13.9 billion**

—*Yes! Magazine*

Small talk doesn’t lead to happiness

As reported in *Psychological Science*, the happiest participants in a study of conversations spent 25 percent less time alone and 70 percent more time talking than the unhappiest participants. The happiest participants had twice as many substantive conversations and one-third as much small talk as the unhappiest participants. These findings suggest that the happy life is social and conversationally deep rather than solitary and superficial. —*Spirituality & Health*

- Number of people in India with access to toilets: **366 million**
- Number of people in India with access to cell phones: **563.7 million**

—*New York Times*

Catholic annulments in U.S.

- Percent of global Catholic membership in the United States: **6**
- Percent of Catholic annulments granted to U.S. members in 2006: **60**

—*Religion News Service*

Double standard on terrorism label

When 19 Muslim men crashed two planes into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, it was widely labeled “Islamic terrorism,” even as many Muslims cringed at the term. So when nine members of a Michigan-based Christian militia, fueled by visions of the apocalypse, laid plans to gun down police officers, many Muslims wonder why it isn’t labeled “Christian terrorism.”—*Religion News Service*

12 things really educated people do

1. Establish an individual set of values but recognize those of the surrounding community and the various cultures of the world.

2. Explore their own ancestry, culture and place.

3. Are comfortable being alone yet understand dynamics between people and form healthy relationships.

4. Accept mortality, knowing that every choice affects the generations to come.

5. Create new things and find new experiences.

6. Think for themselves; observe, analyze and discover truth without relying on the opinions of others.

7. Favor love, curiosity, reverence and empathy rather than material wealth.

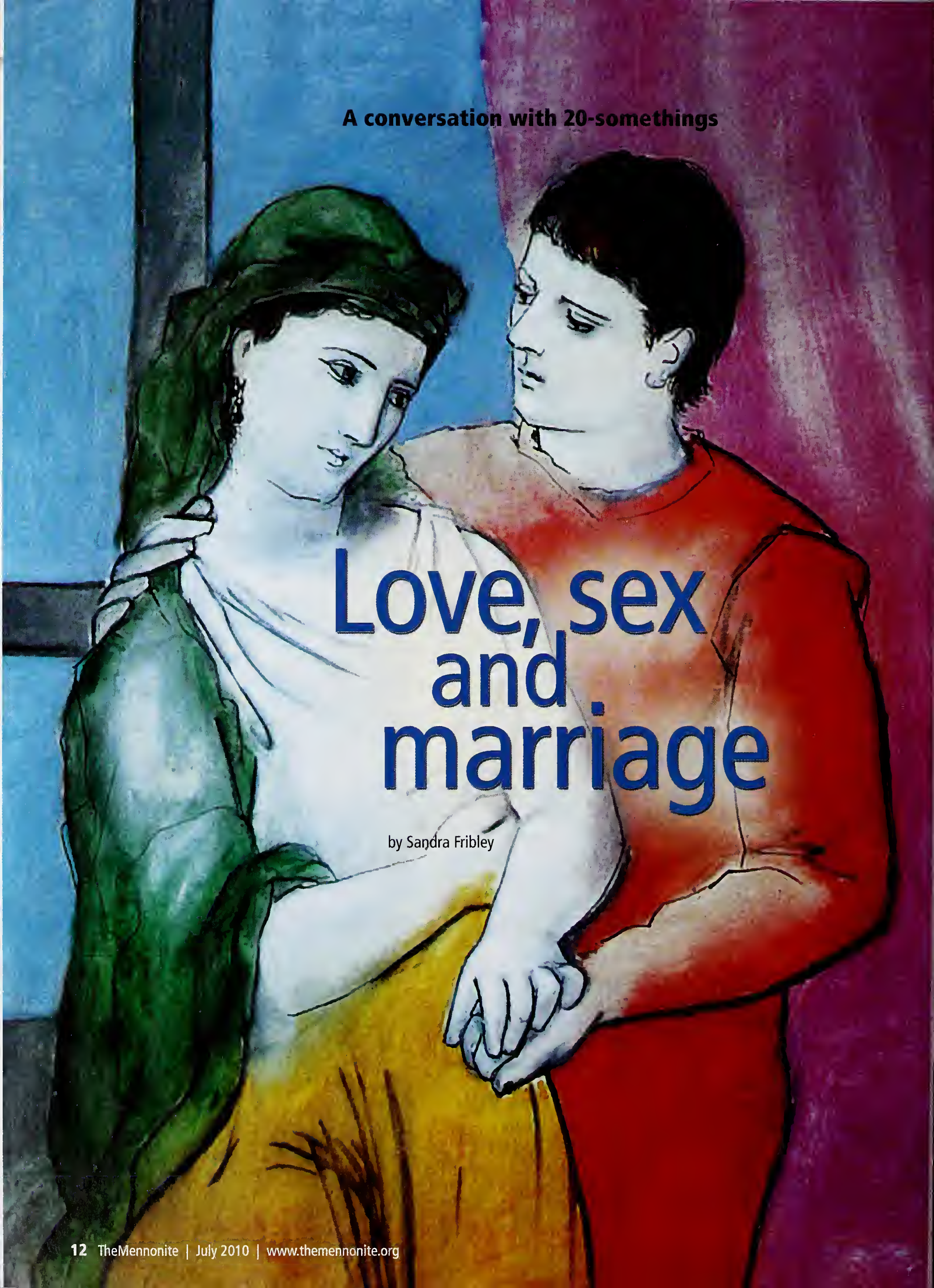
8. Choose a vocation that contributes to the common good.

9. Enjoy a variety of new places and experiences but identify and cherish a place to call home.

10. Express their own voice with confidence.

11. Add value to every encounter and every group of which they are a part.

12. Always ask: Who am I? Where are my limits? What are my possibilities?—*Yes! Magazine*



A conversation with 20-somethings

Love, sex and marriage

by Sandra Fribley

I am a 57-year-old woman in a comfortable 26-year marriage, and I think a lot about sex. The reason? I have a 21-year-old son, who is in college.

My concerns have been heightened not only by conversations with my son but also by a seminar I attended last summer at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., entitled "Unmarried Couples Living Together." More than 70 pastors and church leaders showed up for this day-long event, nearly twice as many as usually attend these regularly scheduled workshops.

Between the statistics offered by our speaker, Irma Fast Dueck of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the questions and comments of the participants, I realized that this matter of changing sexual attitudes is the elephant in the room that everyone—and no one—wants to discuss.

I learned that the notion of celibacy before marriage has largely been abandoned, even by churchgoing young adults. More than half of couples marrying for the first time have first lived together, we were told, and nearly 75 percent of single people have been sexually active by age 20.

The speaker encouraged us to think about current brain research and hormones. The part of the brain responsible for rational decision-making isn't fully developed until age 25, but the average age for the onset of puberty is 11 for girls and 13 for boys. Now consider that the average age for first-time marriage is 27 for men and 25 for women. How surprising is it that young adults are not waiting until marriage to have sex?

How do parents and church leaders (some of whom, if they're honest, also didn't wait until marriage to have sex) respond to these changing sexual attitudes in the church?

Clearly we need to foster boundary-conscious, respectful dialogue with teenagers and 20-somethings both inside and outside our churches. If we want adult-to-adult relationships with the emerging adults of our churches and homes, we need to create safe places both to listen and to be heard.

The questions that follow are ones I have found helpful in conversations with my son and other young adults and have emerged out of my own study of current research on changing sexual attitudes and social trends.

Do you see yourself happily married someday?

In his 2007 essay "The Future of Marriage in America," sociologist David Popenoe, summarizing the results of a survey of 6,000 high school seniors, wrote, "The great majority of American high school seniors still want to get married, with 82 percent of girls and 70 percent of boys saying that 'having a good marriage and family life' is 'extremely important' to them."

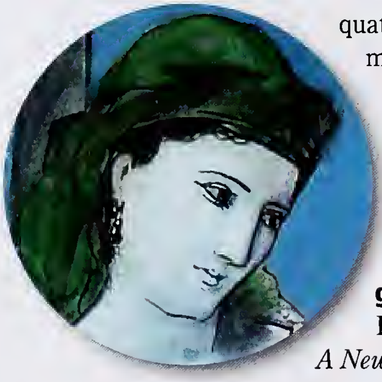
More than half of couples marrying for the first time have first lived together, and nearly 75 percent of single people have been sexually active by age 20.

Assuming this desire for a good marriage is true for most young adults, the question becomes one of how they best realize that desire. Contradictory attitudes seem to reveal that while young people want to be happily married someday, they don't have a great deal of hope that their dreams can come true.

Only 39 percent of high school girls and 32 percent of boys in this survey believed that marriage will lead to more happiness in life than remaining single or cohabiting. Seen as an affirmation of singleness, these statistics reflect a good trend. Marriage, after all, is not a requirement for a fulfilled life. But taken with the high percentage of 18-year-olds who said a good marriage and family life is extremely important to them, these statistics belie an underlying fatalism that is hard to ignore.

> Building a good marriage is fraught with setbacks, failure and sacrifice, all of which are better weathered in a community of friends who share these struggles and find value in them.

It is in this apparent gap between what young people say they want and their lack of hope in being able to have what they want that marriage advocates can stand. We need to be able to adequately articulate just why marriage is still a meaningful arrangement. We also need to be able to offer some hope that long-term marriages are still possible, in spite of that recurring statistic that says half of all marriages end in divorce.



What do you think makes for a good marriage?

In her book *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions*, psychiatrist Roberta M. Gilbert describes an "extraordinary" relationship as one that is "separate, equal and open," which is, in essence, her definition of what love looks like in any satisfying relationship. She highlights the importance of both friendship ("upon which all solid relationships must be based") and personal autonomy (the ability "to think independently in the presence of the other").

A thoughtful reading of Gilbert's analysis of family systems theory leads to the understanding that only adults who take responsibility for their own emotional maturity can value the needs and life goals of others in the same way they value their own. The ability to follow this version of the Golden Rule within a marriage has become more important for marital success in our day than a commitment to stay married no matter what.

Our sons and daughters, many of whom now separate sexual relations from long-term commitment, seem to compartmentalize their sex drive from their longings for deep friendship and emotional intimacy. In one way, they seem to recognize their own need to mature emotionally so that they can be ready for the kind of relationship Gilbert describes. In the meantime, though, they want to enjoy their sexuality without assuming the responsibilities and expectations of marriage. Many express a desire to achieve career goals and income requirements and satisfy their wanderlust before settling down.

How have we as parents and in the church encouraged our children in this way of thinking, without considering the reality of the human sex drive? Beyond promoting abstinence before marriage, early marriage or "safe sex," what practical, reality-based counsel can the church offer single adults when even the topic of self-pleasure is still taboo in many Christian circles? I confess my own discomfort—and the sudden realization of just which side of the generation gap I'm on—upon reading an article in one student-produced magazine about a new kind of in-home sales party popular among college-age women. Mary Kay? A new line of jewelry? No—sex toys, complete with demonstrations on how to use them.

Perhaps in our desire to provide well for our children and in our attempts to build their self-esteem by applauding their achievements, we have unwittingly sent the message that being comfortable, successful and self-satisfied are the ultimate life goals and that the struggle, pain, failure and self-denial that come with love and friendship have no value.

Building a good marriage is fraught with setbacks, failure and sacrifice, all of which are better weathered in a community of friends who share these struggles and find value in them. Our children have been watching us as we relate in our own marriages. They have noticed what the church says—and does not say—about sex and marriage. Some have experienced the pain of divorce. Many apparently have concluded that mar-

Ways to reduce the chances of divorce

The chances for divorce are not the same for everyone who marries. For couples whose combined annual income is over $50,000, the chance for divorce drops by 30 percent. Waiting to have a baby until after marriage reduces the risk of divorce by 24 percent. Marrying after age 25 reduces the risk by 24 percent. If one's parents are still married, if one is religious and if one has at least some college experience, the risk of divorce is further reduced.—*The National Marriage Project (http://rutgers.edu), a nonpartisan, nonsectarian and interdisciplinary initiative of Rutgers University* riage is best avoided or put off until they have time to find the "perfect" partner. This, in part, explains why over 50 percent of young adults cohabit before marriage, their attempt to "be sure" before saying, "I do."

How would you describe your current relationships?

Storytelling is a good, usually nonthreatening way to share information. I have listened carefully to my son's descriptions of his relationship experiences and to his own take on the hook-up culture. I have had to learn to tread carefully and not overreact to attitudes and descriptions outside my comfort zone.

I have earned the kind of trust and respect in these conversations that helps him listen to my stories—stories of my early romantic encounters and of my marriage relationship. I have tried to be honest about my regrets and about the ways love within marriage has been both a struggle and a gift. Our dialogue has helped me find and articulate new meaning in the losses and benefits of my own marriage.

What kind of family life do you think is best for children?

Perhaps the attitudes and behaviors most disturbing to me are the ones that deny that sexual intercourse can result in a pregnancy (not to mention sexually transmitted diseases). According to a National Public Radio report on April 20, 2009, over 50 percent of pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, and seven out of 10 of those pregnancies occur in women between the ages of 20 and 29. "Magical thinking," even by college-educated young people, was the reason given for this trend.

Out of 6,000 high school seniors surveyed by The National Marriage Project, 56 percent said that "having a child without being married is experimenting with a worthwhile lifestyle" or "is not affecting anyone else." Anyone who, like me, works in a public school knows the often-sad outcome of that attitude. Children of young single parents are often living in poverty and/or living with grandparents.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, co-director of The National Marriage Project, in testimony before a Senate subcommittee, said, "According to some researchers, growing up with both married parents in a low-conflict marriage is so important to child well-being that it is replacing race, class and neighborhood as the greatest source of difference in child outcomes."

In her book *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce*, Elizabeth Marquardt, a researcher and herself a child of divorced parents, interviewed 71 adults under 30, half of whom were from divorced families. All were college graduates. Her interviews, along with a telephone survey of 1,500 young adults, half of whom were from divorced families, revealed that "even successful young people are profoundly shaped by childhood divorce." In her conclusion, Marquardt writes, "Those of us who are children of divorce are not all falling apart, but neither are we willing to be held up as proof—convenient proof—that kids don't really need both parents."

Parents may need to come to terms with the possibility that they will never be grandparents.

Issues surrounding birth control, abortion, unplanned pregnancies and divorce continue to raise points of disagreement and division in the church at large. What we can agree on, though, and discuss with the young adults in our homes and churches are the ethical issues surrounding procreation. Emerging adults, particularly those whose own parents have divorced, can identify with the notion that children need parents who want them, who are committed to loving each other and who are prepared to put their children's needs and happiness before their own.

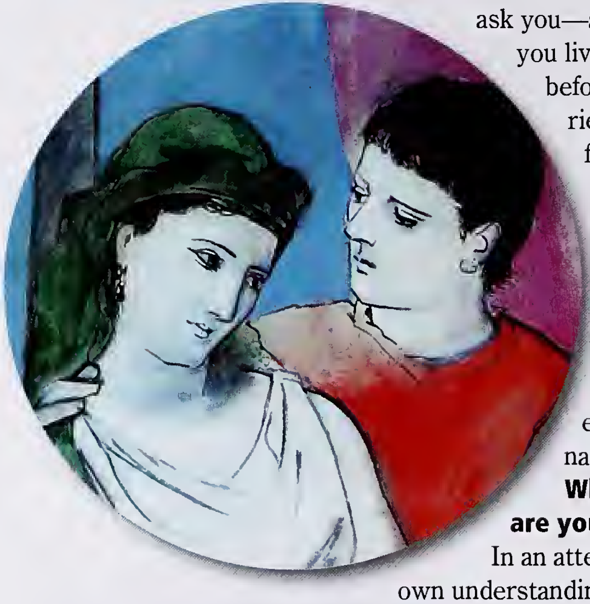
Do you envision yourself a parent someday?

In "Life Without Children: The Social Retreat from Children and How It Is Changing America," Popenoe and Whitehead report, "According to Census Bureau projections, by 2010, households with children will account for little more than one-quarter of all households—the lowest share in the nation's history."

Clearly, not having children—or waiting to have children until one's 30s or later—is a trend that is gaining momentum. No longer is it a given that most people will become parents sometime in life.

Parents may need to come to terms with the possibility that they will never be grandparents. Young adults who express no desire to have children or who want to remain single need acceptance and understanding. People should not marry or have children just to please their parents.

For our Christian sons and daughters who clearly want marriage and children but who are considering cohabitation before marriage, we can ask, "When your children someday ask you—and they will—'Did you live with each other before you were married?' how will you feel about telling them the truth?" They may also be interested to learn that the divorce rate for couples who cohabited before marriage is even higher than the national average.



What kind of love are you looking for?

In an attempt to share my own understanding of love and marital commitment with my son, I described in writing how I view the marriage journey as a spiritual pilgrimage. I was a little surprised to find that he agreed with my vision of marriage despite our differing views on current sexual attitudes and practices.

In the church, I wrote, we believe we need God's grace to love another person exclusively for life. This kind of love serves as a mirror in which we see ourselves as we are in relation to the other and then—to use increasingly old-fashioned terms—repent, confess and receive forgiveness so that we can become even better lovers than before. Our character flaws and our personality quirks become known to us in the light of our partner's willingness to stay with us, accept and forgive, and continue loving us even when he or she has been hurt by who we are.

I explained that this is the kind of love the church believes comes from God and to which humans must aspire if they and this planet are to survive. Love is first a choice and then a daily commitment to the beautifully flawed people we live among. This commitment-driven love between sexual partners produces trust, and trust leads to an intimacy that allows us to be ourselves, weaknesses and all, without fear of rejection. In this intentional, loving context, sex truly becomes lovemaking.

More importantly, this covenant relationship we call marriage provides the best environment for raising not only healthy, happy children but also for creating a partnership that can grow, endure and carry lovers together into old age. Love this strong, this lasting, is not casually given or received but is forged by keeping one's promise to love—day by day—for a lifetime.

Is this the vision of marriage and family life the majority of young adults say is extremely important to them? If so, how do we in the church become marriage advocates in a way that captures the hearts and minds of our children?

It is never too late to engage in respectful dialogue, listen, tell our own stories and reframe old realities and face new ones in the light of God's enduring love.

Sandra Fribley is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

This covenant relationship we call marriage provides the best environment for raising not only healthy, happy children but also for creating a partnership that can grow, endure and carry lovers together into old age.

The peace church as worship of God

If we confess the God of Jesus Christ, a peace church is the only church we can be.

by J. Denny Weaver

We are a peace church.
That much is clear.
The real questions are
how long that will be true
and how long we care.

Signs of drifting: Signs of drift in our commitment are appearing. Here is a short list. Because George W. Bush claimed Jesus as his personal Savior and favorite political philosopher, many Mennonites supported the past president in spite of his aggressive war policies and express little anger at the current president when he continues the same war policies. And the idea is gaining traction in the academic realm that since we are now culturally assimilated, we Mennonites should be willing to "get our hands dirty" to help with "security." In this argument, helping with security means to support the use of guns in both local and international arenas as long as that use is limited and is called "just policing."

The world needs to see and hear that retaliation only continues a cycle of violence and breeds more violence.

These discussions mirror comments from *Road Signs for the Journey: A Profile of Mennonite Church USA*, in which Conrad Kanagy writes, "We have become less likely to resist military service and more likely to say that we would engage in war or carry a weapon." Also there is the frequently voiced fear that too much emphasis on peace might detract from efforts at mission outreach rather than seeing the gospel of peace as an intrinsic and inseparable part of the good news about Jesus Christ.

Why be a peace church: The list of reasons to continue to be a peace church is longer. The most profound reason of all is new to our thinking about the peace church. It may even surprise. This list builds to that most profound of reasons.

1. Being a peace church is our tradition and our history. Not all Anabaptists in the 16th-century Reformation were pacifists. However, in contrast to the other Reformation groups, rejection of the sword was a central issue of discussion among Anabaptists. The enduring voices were the pacifist ones, and Anabaptists became identified as a pacifist movement. Maintaining Mennonite Church USA today as a peace church is being true to this heritage and tradition.

2. People outside Mennonites expect us to be a peace church. For example, more than half the members of my congregation in Madison belonged to another denomination before they became Mennonites. They sought out Madison Mennonite Church because of the Mennonite tradition of being a peace church. We need not to disappoint such seekers.

3. For many Muslims, Christianity is the religion that attacked Islam in the Crusades and the religion of the people behind the guns aimed at Muslims today. The world of Islam needs to see a peaceful Christian tradition and a denomination that respects the religion of Islam.

4. All the armed countries of the world need us to be a peace church. The world needs us to hold up an image of the peaceable reign of God in the face of seeming unending military conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The world needs to see and hear that retaliation only continues a cycle of violence and breeds more violence. There are more people angry at the United States now than there were before the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, which had the purported goal of stopping terrorism.

5. Observing the disastrous effects of retaliation confirms the truth of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:38-48 and shows that being a peace church makes sense. Many commentators believe that Jesus' saying "Do not resist an evildoer" means "Do not mirror evil" or, "Do not respond to violence with more violence." Then the commands about turning the other cheek, giving inner along with outer garment and going the second mile are examples of responses that change the situation without mirroring evil. "Love your enemies" follows with another version of "Do not mirror evil." It means, rather than responding with more evil or violence, do something to change the situation. Paul repeats that wisdom in Romans 12:17-21 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15, and it is repeated again in 1 Peter 3:9. When one sees the increase in the number of terrorist events after the U.S. invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the truth of Jesus' words becomes apparent. Violence does not solve problems. Instead, it spreads problems around and breeds more violence.

6. Mennonite Church USA needs to be a peace church for its own health. For at least three decades we have been struggling with the seemingly intractable problem of the place of gays and lesbians in our congregations. There are concerned, committed people on all sides of this issue. If we could solve the question to everyone's satisfaction on the basis of what we know now, we would have done so long ago. Showing how the peace church maintains itself in love in the face of seemingly intractable problems is part of our witness to the world, but it is also part of

what we do for ourselves.

7. We are disciples of Jesus. Jesus rejected the sword. To be his disciples means to do likewise. Drifting away from the idea of being a peace church is to drift away from following Jesus Christ.

A nonviolent God

8. Finally, and most profoundly, being a peace church is the way to worship God. More specifically, it is the way to worship the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. Since this is a new discussion, it takes some explaining.

We believe God is fully revealed in the story of Jesus Christ, in his life, teaching, death and resurrection. Jesus rejected violence. If God is fully revealed in Jesus, then God also refuses to use or sanction violence. If God is fully revealed in Jesus, then God is nonviolent. We should cultivate nonviolent images of God. This may require rethinking some commonly held beliefs.

Images of a violent God: There is a long tradition of seeing God as violent or as a God who sanctions or exercises violence. When a man's wife dies from cancer, well-meaning friends tell the grieving husband, "God had a plan for your wife." Although strangely silent after the earthquake in Chile, a well-known religious broadcaster blamed the earthquake that devastated Haiti on a curse because "they made a pact with the devil." A few months ago, ABC News reported that for several years the manufacturer Trijcon had been putting Bible verses, including New Testament verses, into the serial numbers of rifle scopes it sold to the military. In 1 Samuel 15 God commanded King Saul to "utterly destroy" the Amalekites, "kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." But Samuel spared Agag the king, as well as the best of the cattle and the valuable treasure. Because Saul had disobeyed and God was displeased, God removed the kingship from Saul.

These stories have a common thread. All assume that God either sanctions killing—whether through Saul's massacre of Amalekites with the sword or through Americans shooting at Iraqis and Afghanis with Bible-blessed scopes—or that God kills directly—whether one woman with cancer or some 200,000 Haitians with an earthquake. We need to abandon this view of a God who kills.

The omnipotence of God: The assumption that God uses and sanctions violence often goes hand in hand with the idea of God's omnipotence. The idea that God is omnipotent—all powerful—is assumed to mean that nothing happens without God's authorization and that in fact God controls all that happens. The implication is that God exercises evil and violence and sanctions violence as well as being a God of love and mercy. God can do anything and has no limits, the argument goes, so of course God must direct evil and violence as well as convey blessings and act mercifully. Thus cancer and earthquakes must be God's doing, and Bible verses on weapons both bear witness to the God of Christians and bless the killing the weapons accomplish. Some version of these assumptions about omnipotence and divine violence have been the dominant and traditional view in Christian theology for much of Christian history.

Historical responses to the idea of a violent God have varied. One response abandons the idea of God's omnipotence. This response assumes that God is loving and merciful, and on the basis of that assumption reaches the conclusion that a loving God is not all powerful. Wouldn't a God both lov-

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There is a long tradition of seeing God as violent or as a God who sanctions or exercises violence.

ing and all-powerful, the argument goes, have prevented the great misery caused by things like cancer and earthquakes?

A second response goes a step farther, to atheism. Those who take this step of belief refuse to accept the existence of a God who would cause the misery of an earthquake in Haiti and kill a man's wife with cancer. Thus the idea of divinely sanctioned violence can actually promote atheism.

But if these three answers—God kills, God is weak and God does not exist—were a multiple choice test, the correct answer would be "none of the above." There is a fourth, less well-known answer. This fourth answer requires rethinking sections of the traditional theological outline.

The problem of an omnipotent God who kills has two dimensions. One dimension concerns the image of God as a violent God and a God who sanctions violence. The other dimension concerns the understanding of omnipotence or what it means to say that God is all powerful. The following discussion addresses both dimensions.

The Old Testament has a conversation about the character of God.

A conversation about God and violence: There is no doubt that the Old Testament has images of a God who kills and sanctions killing. We saw one example in 1 Samuel 15. Others come to mind—the stories of a great flood (Genesis 6-8) or the killing of the Egyptian army in the exodus or the massacre of the inhabitants of Jericho and Ai in the conquest of Canaan. Understanding that God is nonviolent requires dealing with these.

Eric Seibert makes a helpful suggestion in his book *Disturbing Divine Behavior: Troubling Old Testament Images of God*. He explains that we should distinguish between the "textual God" and the "actual God." In other words, we can see that the text describes a God who practices or sanctions violence, but we can know from another source that God is actually nonviolent.

Beyond distinguishing the textual God from the actual God, there is more to say about the images of God in the Old Testament. This part of the Bible portrays a conversation about the character of God, and the God who practices and sanctions violence is only one side of that conversation.

Consider some familiar stories. Genesis 1 and 2 have two different images of creation. In Genesis 1, God is said to create by speaking. Genesis 2 projects a different image—God creates by kneeling on the ground and forming people and animals out of clay. Each of these images teaches that God is the origin of whatever is.

But something else becomes visible when these two stories are compared with another creation story, the Enuma Elish. This text is a Babylonian creation myth, contemporaneous with the time of Abraham. In the Enuma Elish, the earth, sky and human beings are all the product of violence. Marduk killed the female god Timat in a battle. Marduk then sliced the distended body of Timat in two and elevated the upper half to make the dome of the sky. After a search to determine who had inspired Tiamat's rebellion, the guilty god was killed. His blood was then used to make human beings, who would act as servants to the gods. Against such violent stories, it should jump out that in the accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 we have images of a God who creates without violence. The Bible begins with nonviolent images of God.

Consider the account of God's command to massacre the Amalekites against the story in 2 Kings 6 of Elisha's solution to a threat to the Israelites posed by the king of Aram. Several times the king set an ambush for the king of Israel, but Elisha the prophet somehow learned of these encampments and warned Israel's king to stay away. When he learned of Elisha's actions, the angry king of Aram sent a large armed force to capture Elisha. In the morning, when Elisha's servant saw this force, he was fearful. However, Elisha prayed that his eyes be opened, and he saw an army of fiery chariots that was protecting them. Elisha then prayed that the king's army be blinded—unable to detect where they were. Elisha told the army they were in the wrong city and that he would lead them to the place where they would find the man they sought. And he led them to Samaria and into the presence of the king of Israel. Here their eyes were opened and they realized where they were. And the king of Israel asked, "Shall I kill them?" (v. 21). And Elisha said, No, give them something to eat and drink and send them back to their master. So the king of Israel set out "a great feast." And after they had feasted, he sent them back to the king of Aram. The story concludes, "And the Arameans no longer came raiding into the land of Israel" (v. 23).

We need to put this story of nonviolent conflict resolution over against the story of the command for a massacre given to Saul. The Old Testament has a conversation about the character of God that we can only briefly observe in this space. The nonviolent God of the creation stories is pictured against the God who is said to use a great flood to massacre all of humanity except for Noah's family. Further, in contrast to stories of military victories and assassinations is the account of Gideon, who routed an army of Midianites with 300 men armed only with trumpets, pitchers and torches (Judges 7:1-23). The book of Joshua pictures a violent and thorough conquest of the promised land, but along with the book of Judges, Joshua also displays an incomplete conquest and occupation of the land. The conversation includes the contrast between Nahum and Jonah. In Nahum, God is said to celebrate vengeance on Ninevah, whereas the later book of Jonah portrays God as merciful to the city. On the side of nonviolent resistance are the stories of Esther and of Daniel and his three friends.

What has been missing from much of our understanding has been the fact that the Old Testament contains a series of writings and stories that constitute a tradition of nonviolent resistance and a God who does not practice violence. In fact, these stories represent one side of a conversation about the character of God that goes on throughout the Old Testament. We have been familiar with the texts that portray a violent God but have been less aware of the nonviolent side of the conversation. The question for us becomes, Which of these stories and which side of the conversation best reflects the will and the character of God? The violent side or the nonviolent side?

The God revealed in the resurrection of Jesus is the God who responds to the taking of life by restoring of life.

The answer does not come by simply putting a finger on one or the other of the stories and reciting it in a loud voice. To decide which side of the conversation best reflects the character of God, we need a criterion outside these stories.

Perhaps the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 are the beginning of a clue. The fact that the Bible begins with a nonviolent image of God carries some weight.

That clue is followed by a stronger one. As Christians, our identity comes from the story of Jesus. It is obvious which of these paths through the Old Testament reflects the God revealed in Jesus and finds its fulfillment in Jesus. We know that Jesus rejected violence. And his story is a continuation of the history of God's people that began with Abraham. Their God was the nonviolent creator God. Obviously the Israelites did not all understand God in the same way, and often they lost track of the nonviolent character of God. Nonetheless, that the God of Israel is fully revealed in the story of Jesus is a bedrock tenet of Christian faith. Thus if we truly accept the confession that God is fully revealed in Jesus, it should be obvious that God is not a God who sanctions violence or who kills. It is a misunderstanding of God to think that God commanded a massacre or deliberately kills a man's wife with cancer or slays 200,000 Haitians with an earthquake.

The omnipotence of God again: The issue of the omnipotence of God remains. Is a nonviolent God truly omnipotent?

The violent God, the God who uses and sanctions violence, is a God made in our own image. This God has to punish evil and violence, and that punishment supposedly happens with greater violence exercised by God. It is like the child bullied

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If we confess the God of Jesus Christ, a peace church is the only church we can be.

on the school ground who threatens to get his big brother to beat up the bully. Violence is met with greater violence. And God then exercises the greatest violence of all, now and in the end. This is a God who mirrors human violence.

The God who reflects our image is obviously stronger than we are. As weak human beings, we can lift only small weights. God who is so much stronger can lift the ultimate weight. But again, this is just a God created in our image—a God who mirrors what we do, only more so.

But the God revealed in Jesus is not the God made in our image, not the God who responds to violence with more violence and lifts the ultimate weight. The God revealed in Jesus is the God who acts to change the situation.

How does God act to change the situation? The answer is the resurrection of Jesus. God responds to the violence of taking life by restoring life. When people used violence against Jesus, God's Anointed One, God did not mirror their violence. Instead God changed the situation. God responded with resurrection.

The resurrection speaks to our understanding of the omnipotence of God. Resurrection shows us that the omnipotence of God is the opposite of the image of the God who uses the most violence and lifts the heaviest weight. The God revealed in the resurrection of Jesus is the God who responds to the taking of life by restoring of life. The God revealed in Jesus is not a God who responds to human violence by using more, sometimes infinitely more violence. Here then is how I would define the omnipotence of God: the ability to restore life where there is currently no life, and the ability to carry out the divine will in spite of human violence and disobedience. Rather than a definition of God's omnipotence that is made in the image of humankind, that definition of omnipotence is the opposite of humankind.

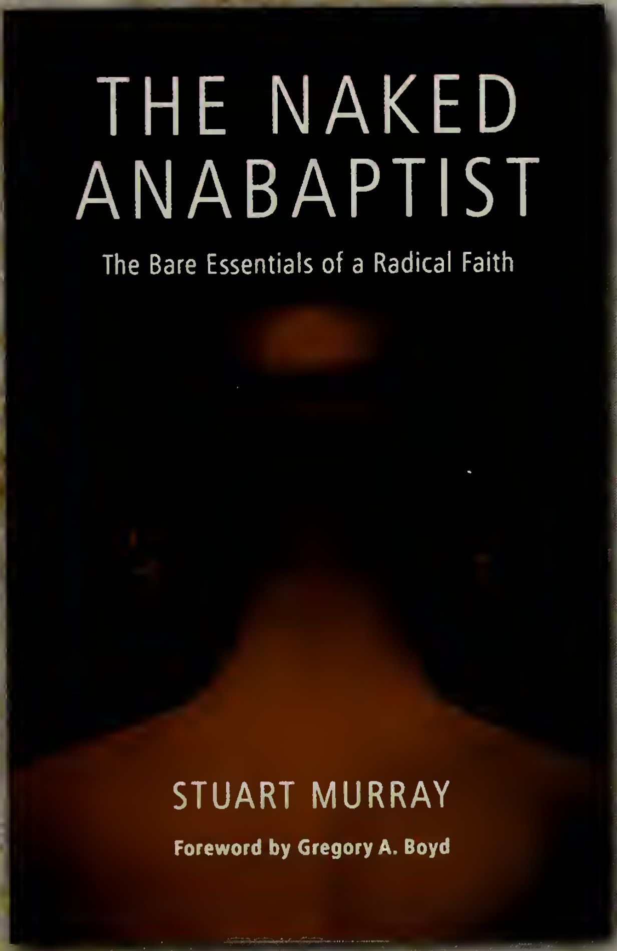
The ultimate fulfillment of the divine will in spite of human violence and disobedience will occur at the final consummation with the return of Jesus. In the meantime, although evil has been defeated by the resurrection, it is still thrashing around and able to inflict suffering. It is as though we are playing in the middle of the fourth quarter of a football game in which the outcome of the game was settled at the end of the first half, when the winning team—our team—capitalized on the opponent's errors and scored four touchdowns to put the game out of reach. That scoring spree is like the resurrection. The game continues, and we can be injured, but the outcome is determined. The reign of God is victorious, even as suffering and evil are still present.

The nonviolent and omnipotent God is the one fully revealed in the life of Jesus. This God restores life rather than taking life. This God gives us comfort and strength to endure and resist the ongoing evil that Jesus' resurrection has already defeated.

The most profound reason of all to be a peace church is because the God revealed in the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is a nonviolent God. This is the God that we should worship at the center of our life as a peace church. If we confess the God of Jesus Christ, a peace church is the only church we can be.

J. Denny Weaver is professor emeritus of religion at Bluffton (Ohio) University. He attends Madison (Wis.) Mennonite Church.

The 'bare essentials' of Anabaptism


THE NAKED ANABAPTIST
The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith
STUART MURRAY
Foreword by Gregory A. Boyd

Anabaptism has been around for almost 500 years. For much of that time, it has been clothed in Mennonite and Amish traditions and culture. But what does it look like without Mennonite and Amish clothing? That's what Stuart Murray wondered; the result is *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* (Herald Press). For Murray, who helps direct the Anabaptist Network in Great Britain and Ireland, Anabaptism is a way of following Jesus that challenges, disturbs and inspires, summoning Christians to lives of discipleship and worship. In March he took time to answer some questions about his new book.

Author Stuart Murray talks about the making of *The Naked Anabaptist*

Today we are living in a post-Christendom era, when the church is no longer at the center of societal life.

Why did you write this book?

More and more people in Great Britain are seeing Anabaptism as an exciting way to live out their faith. They want to know: Where did Anabaptism come from? What are its core convictions? And, Do I have to give up my own church tradition to become one? *The Naked Anabaptist* is my effort to provide some answers. It's a way to simply answer the questions people are asking about Anabaptism by people who know nothing about it or who are confused about what it really was all about.

What kinds of questions were being asked?

The questions that came up most often were: What is an Anabaptist? Where did they come from? What do they believe? Can I become an Anabaptist? What is the difference between Anabaptists and Mennonites? And, Can I be an Anabaptist without living in a common purse community like the Hutterites, driving a buggy like the Amish or belonging to a Mennonite church and singing in four-part harmony?

How did you come up with the term "naked Anabaptist"?

It was actually my friend Noel Moules who coined it. While traveling with some Mennonite church leaders in 2008 in Pennsylvania, he was quizzed about the growing interest in Anabaptism in Britain and Ireland. They wanted to know why growing numbers of British and Irish Christians were interested in Anabaptism and what Anabaptism looked like without the Mennonite or Amish culture in which it is usually clothed in North America. To which Noel replied, "You mean, what does a naked Anabaptist look like?" When I heard Noel's story, I knew I had a title for this book.

Why do you think there is growing interest in Anabaptism in Great Britain and other countries in Europe?

Europe has become very secular. The old links between the church and the state—what used to be called Christendom—are disappearing. Today we are living in a post-Christendom era, when the church is no longer at the center of societal life. Since the early Anabaptists also lived at the margins of society, their experiences and perspectives are attractive to many people who are looking for ways to live faithfully as followers of Jesus today.

What are the bare essentials of Anabaptism for you?

For me there are seven essentials or core convictions. First and foremost is belief in Jesus; he is our example, teacher, friend, redeemer and Lord. The second is seeing Jesus as the focal point of God's revelation. The third is being free from the state and all that Christendom implied.

Fourth, Anabaptists are committed to finding ways to be good news to the poor, powerless and persecuted. Fifth, Anabaptist churches are called to be communities of discipleship and mission, friendship, mutual accountability and multivoiced worship. Sixth, spirituality and economics are connected for Anabaptists, which is important in our individualist and consumerist culture.

Finally, for Anabaptists peace is central to the gospel. It is not the center of the gospel—Jesus is the center of it all. It is as followers of Jesus that we are committed to finding nonviolent alternatives to violence in our world—not peace for its own sake.

You wrote this book for people in Great Britain. Do you think this book will be useful in North America, too?

I hope so. During my visits to the United States and Canada I have encountered the same kinds of questions—people are genuinely interested in Anabaptism but either don't know anything about it or can't see past the Amish and Mennonite clothing that covers it. That includes Mennonites themselves, by the way; my hope is that many Mennonites in the United States and Canada will read it and become interested in recovering their own radical heritage.

What do you mean by "recover their own radical heritage"?

During my visits to the United States and Canada I have been amazed by the lack of interest in Anabaptism that I find among many North American Mennonites. I don't know why that is, exactly; I know there has been a lot of discussion about Anabaptism at seminaries and colleges, but I wonder if it hasn't been able to filter down to congregations. Or maybe it has gotten so lost beneath all the Mennonite traditions and trappings over time so that it doesn't seem special anymore.

I don't want to be misunderstood; I am appreciative of Mennonites and how they have kept Anabaptism alive all these years. They have demonstrated how Anabaptist insights are worked out in the lives of families and congregations and how this tradition can be passed on to the next generation. I would not be an Anabaptist if not for the work of Alan and Eleanor Krieder and the London Mennonite Centre. We owe them a great debt.

But I still find it ironic that it seems to be those of us who didn't grow up as Mennonites who are far more excited about Anabaptist tradition than traditional Mennonites today. Maybe this book can help change that a bit.

What is your ultimate goal for this book?

My goal is not to promote Anabaptism for its own sake. My interest is in promoting a way of living that helps people become more faithful followers of Jesus. Through it, I want to pay tribute to generations of Anabaptist Christians who witnessed faithfully, refused to conform to social norms, pioneered new ways of being church, challenged dominant assumptions about violence and sometimes suffered appallingly. But in the end I am interested in the Anabaptist tradition only as a means to an end, and that end is to point us to Jesus as the one we are to follow and worship.

In addition to *The Naked Anabaptist*, Stuart Murray is author of the bestselling Herald Press books *Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and New Ideas for Creating Congregations* and *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*.

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith *($13.99), is available from Mennonite Publishing Network at www.mpn.net/nakedanabaptist or by calling 800-245-7892.*

People are genuinely interested in Anabaptism but either don't know anything about it or can't see past the Amish and Mennonite clothing that covers it.

BeingMennonite

by Karl Landis

It does not mean being Swiss-German.

How many times have you heard someone say, "That is so Mennonite" or, "I hate to be overly Mennonite about this, but. . . ." How about, "That's not a Mennonite name." What do you think people mean when they say these things? After reading this article, I hope you'll never use any of these phrases again.

I cringe whenever I hear someone say one of these things because they remind me that many of us, at least those of us from the mostly Swiss-German part of the denomination, still largely confuse being Mennonite with being Swiss-German. I suppose it is not too surprising that any body of ideas represented for several centuries predominantly by one ethnic group will end up being interwoven with and confused with that ethnic group's culture. But it is high time we do away with that confusion.

Because Swiss-Germans tend to be emotionally restrained rather than expressive, tend to avoid conflict rather than deal with it directly, tend to pinch pennies rather than spend money freely, tend to defer to other people rather than step forward themselves, these traits have been mistakenly associated with being Mennonite where most Mennonites have been Swiss-German.

Because Swiss-Germans tend to be passive-aggressive in dealing with conflict, some confuse this with a Mennonite approach to conflict even though there is nothing in our confession of faith or our core values that calls for us to deal with conflict in this way. It's just a bad cultural habit that Swiss-Germans pass on. We desperately need people from other ethnic backgrounds to help us develop healthier, more effective ways to deal with conflict. Our "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love" document calls for us to deal with conflict in more direct and assertive ways, but to be honest, that continues to be a stretch for most of us who are Swiss-German.

Swiss Germans tend to mistake confidence for pride—and have for centuries. One Mennonite congregation I know is recovering from a recent struggle over this very issue. When the new pastor arrived, he could not figure out why it was so hard to identify and recruit leaders in the congregation. No one seemed to believe in themselves enough to take any responsibility. After further investigation, he discovered that the people with leadership gifts, the people willing to take initiative and responsibility, had all left after being consistently undermined and relentlessly criticized for being proud.

Why do we refer to this as "Mennonite" behavior rather than "the dark side of Swiss-German culture"? Is there anything in our theology that calls for us to be passive-aggressive or to confuse confidence and pride? We call these behaviors Mennonite simply because many of us have behaved in these ways. In fact, they are based on a caricature of biblical humility that has shaped the habits of Swiss-German families.

This is even clearer if we associate positive things such as quilting, eating scrapple or sauerkraut, canning or hunting with being Mennonite. These are simply cultural practices of rural Swiss-Germans and have nothing to do with our confession of faith or our core values.

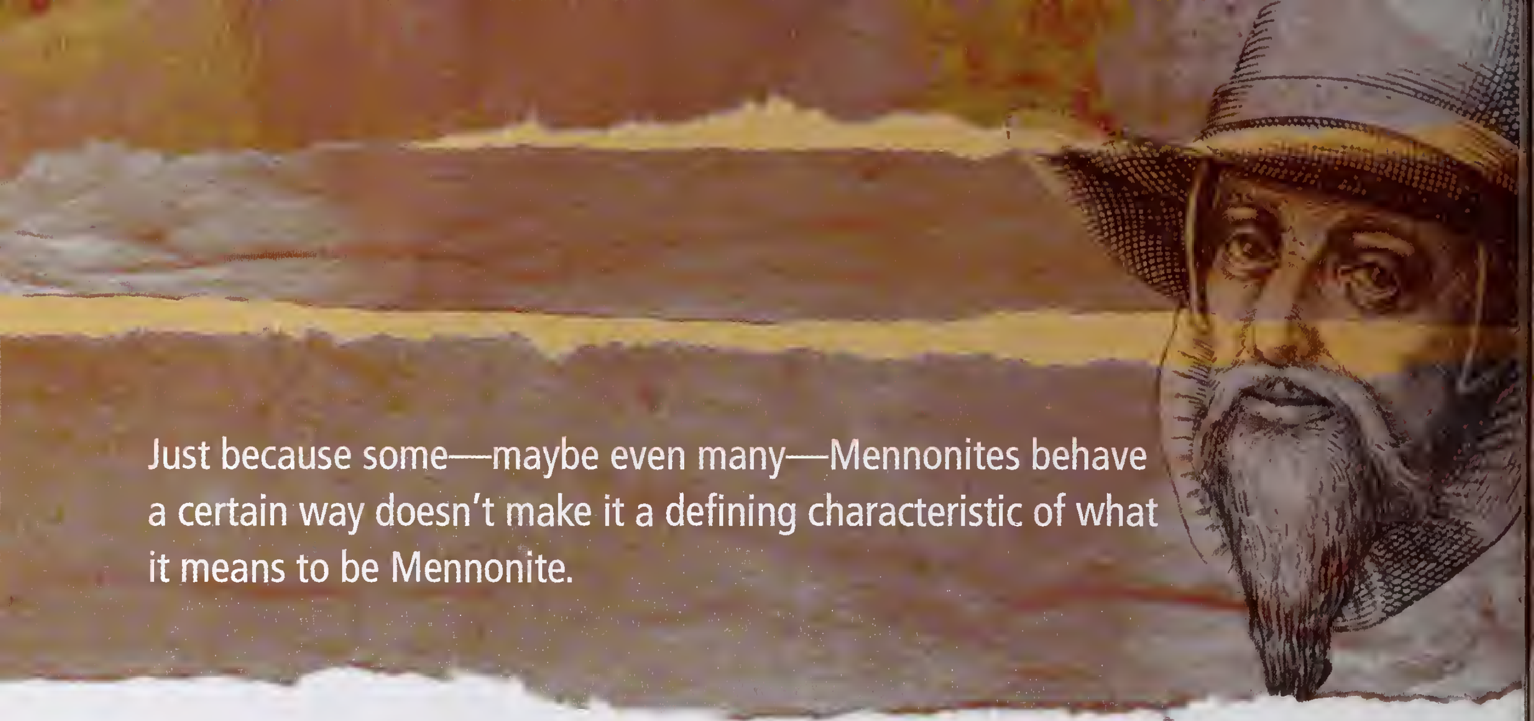
Another question worth pondering along these lines is, How many plain Mennonite groups in the United States are predominately made up of or led by people from ethnic groups other than Swiss-German? The dearth of such groups is a clear indication that there are ethnic and cultural boundaries in place around this approach to the Christian faith.

Because Swiss-Germans tend to be passive-aggressive in dealing with conflict some confuse this with a Mennonite approach to conflict.

One of the tremendous potential benefits from our intercultural and international partnerships, including those in Mennonite World Conference, is the opportunity to rethink what it means to be Mennonite in ways that are not so confused with specific cultural expressions. These partnerships give each national or ethnic group the opportunity to examine the ways in which our culture is intertwined with our theology.

Many of the distinctives of Lancaster Conference Mennonites described in John Ruth's book *The Earth Is the Lord's* are theological in origin but cultural in expression. Living under the cross, nonconformity, nonresistance, simplicity, humility, community discernment—all are theological insights or convictions that need to be lived out in specific ways to have meaning in the real world. But they can all be lived out in a variety of ways. The ways various Mennonite groups have lived them out over the centuries have been specific to the times in which they lived and the cultural habits they inherited.

For example, the fact that Lancaster Conference Mennonites chose to live out these convictions in strict, closed communities that were distinctive in dress and culturally separate was clearly a result of a tightly knit, Swiss-German



> Just because some—maybe even many—Mennonites behave a certain way doesn't make it a defining characteristic of what it means to be Mennonite.

farming community responding to the challenges of its time. While these communities extended mutual aid, they were also tightly bound by shame and guilt. We tend to overlook the likelihood that Mennonites from a Dutch merchant community, an African American farming community, a Vietnamese immigrant community or a Hispanic laborer community responding to these same challenges would have responded in different ways, even though they would have been grounded in the same theological convictions.

Yet because most of those who have carried the Mennonite torch for so long in the eastern United States have been Swiss-Germans, our particular incarnation of Mennonite values came to be confused with what it means to be Mennonite. John Howard Yoder concluded in 1970 that the primary focus of the Mennonite denomination had become the preservation of ethnic Mennonitism rather than the proclamation of the true gospel in word and deed.

I long for the day when being Mennonite means we have released each other to develop a wide variety of ways to do the following:

- call people to a meaningful personal relationship with Jesus;
- take the Lordship of Christ seriously in how we read Scripture and in our theological work;
- follow Christ faithfully and together in daily living;
- be true contrast communities in our local settings;
- love each other and extend mutual aid in extraordinary ways;
- live out reconciliation in our congregations and in our communities;
- interact with public culture in noticeably God-honoring ways;
- work together toward peace rather than resorting to violence;
- practice grace-filled discipline in following Christ together.

So the next time you hear someone associate being Mennonite with Swiss-German cultural habits, don't fall for it. Be sure to confront them directly rather than complaining about them behind their back. Remind yourself that just because some—maybe even many—Mennonites behave a certain way doesn't make it a defining characteristic of what it means to be Mennonite.

Let's change the connotation of that phrase from "someone who acts Swiss-German" to "one who excels in living out our highest theological values in a compelling and winsome way." Would not that be a much better way to think about what it means to be Mennonite? It might even be something we could aspire to.

Karl R. Landis is director of leadership development for Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference.

So you wanna be a Mennonite

The do's and don'ts of including new Mennonites

ONLINE

by Joanna Harader

As a young adult, I studied with Ron Sider, got most of my recipes from the *More with Less Cookbook* and considered *Living More with Less* second only to the Bible in its authority for my life. Still, I did not technically become a Mennonite until my mid-20s, when I joined Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kan.

I fell in love with the Mennonites, and I fell hard. Before I knew it, I was going back to seminary and accepting a pastoral call at my church. ▶

For the most part, I have felt welcomed into this denomination. My congregation quickly forgave my Baptist past. Other Mennonite pastors are warm and inclusive. People at convention are friendly.

Still, every once in awhile I trip across some Mennonite cultural trappings. Little things that are said—or not said—that remind me I am a newcomer to the Mennonite world.

Do offer to show me how to make zwieback. Don't expect me to bring it to a potluck. Or to know how to spell it.

Nobody means to exclude those who are new to the Mennonite tradition. Mennonites are trying to be more inclusive on many levels. So I thought I might further the cause by offering this list of do's and don'ts—to those of you who grew up Mennonite from one who did not:

- Do double-check the spelling of my last name and ask me how to pronounce it (Hair-u-der).
- Don't assume I just misspelled "Harder." And definitely don't ask if I "used to be a Harder."
- Do feel free to play the Mennonite Name Game when you meet another Yoder or Swartzentruber or Wiens. (Really, it's pretty entertaining.)
- Don't abruptly end your conversation with me once you realize I can't play the game. ("No, I did not used to be a Harder.")
- Do offer to show me how to make zwieback.
- Don't expect me to bring it to a potluck. Or to know how to spell it.
- Do sing the alto part of "Praise God from Whom" loud enough that I can catch on.
- Don't start singing the hymn without even announcing the page number. And don't announce the number as 606 (unless we're using the old brown hymnals).
- Do explain to me that Mennonite Church USA is the result of a relatively recent merging of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.
- Don't say, "Well, of course they did that crazy thing. They were MC." Or, "What else would you expect from those old GCs?" with a knowing nod. I don't know. Masters of Cheese-making? Granite Climbers? And for Pete's sake, don't start talking about "OMs." What in the world is OM? Is it contagious?*
- Do tell me about opportunities for my children to attend Mennonite camps.
- Don't simply announce that the Mennoscah or Friedenswald brochures are in. Is a Friedenswald sort of like a zwieback?
- Do patiently explain, for the 4,000th time, how Mennonites are different from Amish.
- Don't tell me I'm the 4,000th person who has asked that annoying question.
- Do share stories from Anabaptist history. What's not to love about Dirk Willems?
- Don't belabor the point that my non-Anabaptist forebears were responsible for the brutal slaying of your principled and peaceful ancestors. (I'm really, really sorry about that.)
- Do tell me about your plans for the weekend.
- Don't expect me to squeal with excitement when those plans involve something called Schmeckfest.
- Do realize that we newer Mennonites among you may have our own faith stories, favorite foods, musical styles and celebrations that involve far too many consonants. Ask us about them.
- And don't forget that "no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid, that foundation is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). It is Christ who binds us together in love. It is our desire to follow Christ's way of peace and justice that keeps us moving forward. Wherever we may have come from, we are now headed down the same path—together.

Joanna Harader is pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kan.

*Note: "MC" is Mennonite Church. "GC" is General Conference Mennonite Church. These two binational denominations merged in 2001 to form Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. "OM" was sometimes used to represent the former Mennonite Church and means "old Mennonite" church.

Early Christians for peace

by David W.T. Brattston

The early church was clearly opposed to participation in war.

All Christians before the mass apostasy of A.D. 249-251 who considered Christian participation in war opposed it on ethical grounds. The army contained some lukewarm Christians, but their exceptions prove the rule.

The earliest sources are mid-second century: Justin Martyr, Christian insertions into the Sibylline Oracles and the Acts of John. Among the improvements in character and behavior noticed upon conversion to Christianity, Justin detailed that people who used to murder each other now refrain from making war on their enemies. Justin spoke of the Roman army as consisting wholly of pagans without any Christians being soldiers. In its Christian edition, the Sibyl puts people who make wars into the same category as those who dishonor their mothers, plot against their brothers, and betray their friends. The Acts of John 36 consigns warmongers to hell, along with tyrants, murderers and robbers.

Soldiers desiring to become Christians must be taught not to kill and even to disobey if ordered to kill. Christians already in the church who try to join the army were to be expelled as despisers of God.

Shortly afterward, the pagan philosopher Celsus criticized Christians for not participating in the armed forces. He feared their pacifism would lead to barbarian conquest if too many Roman men became Christians and would destroy the Christian religion itself. Thus, even pagans of the period recognized noninvolvement in wars as official Christian policy.

Sometime before A.D. 236, Bishop Hippolytus in central Italy ranked war as a sin with murder, revenge, idolatry, selling a free brother into slavery and separating oneself from God. Dating from A.D. 217, his *Apostolic Tradition* sets out the livelihoods disqualifying applicants for church membership. It excludes idol-makers, prostitutes, pimps, gladiators and pagan priests along with military commanders. Soldiers desiring to become Christians must be taught not to kill and even to disobey if ordered to kill. Christians already in the church who try to join the army were to be expelled, as despisers of God. Even enlisting and taking the military oath were forbidden, in addition to killing in war.

Dating from Syria in the first third of the third century, another church manual likewise condemned government officials who were "defiled with wars" in the same passage as idol-makers, murderers, oppressors of the poor, false accusers, idolaters and extortionists.

Tertullian's De Corona 11 considers "whether warfare is proper at all for Christians." A Carthaginian, Tertullian was a clergyman and the founder of Latin Christian literature. His writings mentioned in this article date between A.D. 197 and 220. He asked rhetorically, implying negative answers: "Shall it be held lawful to make an occupation of the sword, when the Lord proclaims that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword? And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him even to sue at law? And shall he apply the chain and the prison and the torture and the punishment who is not the avenger even of his own wrongs? ... How will a Christian man war, nay, how will he serve even in peace, without a sword, which the Lord has taken away?" Tertullian declared outright that Christ "in disarming Peter unbelted every soldier."

But what of a man who is converted when already a soldier? In reply to Christians who cited Scripture to justify participation in war, Tertullian stated: "Of course, if faith comes later and finds any preoccupied with military service, their case is different, as in the instance of those whom John used to receive for baptism, and of those most faithful centurions, I mean the centurion whom Christ approves, and the centurion whom Peter instructs; yet, at the same time, when a man has become a believer, and faith has been sealed, there must be either an immediate abandonment of it, which has been the course with many; or all sorts of quibbling will have to be resorted to in order to avoid offending God, and that is not allowed even outside of military service."

Moreover, we must remember that the New Testament does not state that the centurions were permitted to continue in the army in good faith. The Bible is silent on the point, such elaboration being irrelevant to the thrust of the pericopes.

In his reply to Celsus' attacks, Origen in the late 240s conceded that Christians did not serve in the armed forces, which Origen sought to justify and explain. The greatest Bible scholar and teacher of his time, Origen was professor at the foremost Christian educational institution of the day (at Alexandria, Egypt) and later founded his own in Palestine. He was best placed to represent the consensus of Christian teaching in his time because he traveled throughout the eastern Mediterranean as a theological consultant at the invitation of local pastor-bishops.

Origen asserted that Christians have been taught such that "they would not, although able, have made war even if they had received authority to do so." Further, he writes: "We no longer take up 'sword against nation,' nor do we 'learn war any more,' having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader, instead of those whom our fathers followed."

The proper defense against barbarian hordes, Origen wrote, is prayer. If all Roman men became Christians, as Celsus had feared and Origen hoped, there would be no military or civil calamity, because Christian prayer would prevent invasion by foreign conquerors or, if not, they would themselves become Christians and therefore pacifists. To quote Origen succinctly: "None fights better for the king than we do. We do not indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army—an army of piety—by offering our prayers to God. ... If all the Romans, according to the supposition of Celsus, embrace the Christian faith, they will, when they pray, overcome their enemies; or rather, they will not war at all, being guarded by that divine power which promised to save five entire cities for the sake of 50 people."

As for the divinely-sanctioned warfare in the Old Testament, Origen drew a distinction between the Jewish constitution received from Moses and the Christian constitution received from Christ. Their political sovereignty gone in the Christian era and without a land or government of their own, Jews have no right to war on their enemies. Christianity was instituted to end war and bloodshed by God's people, and Christians therefore abstain from them. For Christians to fight in any war, wrote Origen, would fundamentally overturn their very constitution itself.

In two biblical commentaries Origen wrote that Christians do not or ought not to do anything "factious and warlike." He also preached: "If, therefore, you wish to be made worthy to pursue the inheritance from Jesus and if you wish to claim a portion from him, you must first end all wars and abide in peace."

There was a discrepancy between official church teaching and the actual practice of some individuals, just as there is today. Except for the New Testament examples cited above, all but one instance from our period come from Tertullian.

One such was "The Thundering Legion." Details of the incident remain under debate, but what matters for our purposes is that Christians for a few generations afterward believed it to be true. Sometime in the A.D. 170s the Imperial XIIth Legion was in distress due to a drought and a surrounding enemy. The Christian Legionnaires prayed for rain, with the result that a downpour relieved the Romans' dehydration and frightened off its enemy. Christians of the era touted this as proof that God answers Christians' prayers. Besides Tertullian, the only near-contemporary mention is the report attributed to the Legion's commander, the Roman Emperor himself.

Tertullian dismissed Christians that participated in the military as quibblers, inferior exegetes, servants of two masters, rejecters of the prophecies and "turn their backs on the Scriptures." Christ, he wrote, gave a new law in which all people are to beat their swords into ploughshares and their lances into sickles and nation not to take up the sword against nation and "no more learn to fight" or avenge oneself by a sword.

Christ gave a new law in which all people are to beat their swords into ploughshares.

The pseudonymous report of the Emperor actually fortifies the proposition that Christians in our era of study were in conscience pacifists and non-combatants. It states that the Christian Legionnaires "began the battle, not by preparing weapons or arms or bugles, for such preparation is hateful to them, on account of the God they bear about in their conscience."

Church fathers, a New Testament apocryphon and at least one pagan during the first quarter-millennium A.D. and in such diverse localities as Italy, Carthage, Palestine, Syria, Egypt and elsewhere in the Roman Empire were unanimous that no Christian could participate in war while none wrote to the contrary.

David W.T. Brattston lives in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

Competencies for Mennonite pastors

Lee Lever is director of Denominational Ministry of Mennonite Church USA.

A well-differentiated pastor increases the capacity of a congregation to accept healthy diversity, recognize gifts, express differences, mature in character and welcome new people.

Pastors play a significant role in leadership of Mennonite Church USA. They are in a key position to shape hearts and minds across the church. They interpret the signs of the times through preaching, teaching, modeling, shaping ministries, visioning and being in positions of influence locally and with the wider church. Mennonite Church USA recognizes the importance of the ministerial role and function and has developed guidelines for assessing the qualifications of candidates for ministry.

A person seeking to serve in a ministerial role or seeking a ministerial credential with Mennonite Church USA is required to complete the online Ministerial Leadership Information form and provide four references. The MLI is a 13-page document with six sections:

1. **Background information** (contact info, church connections, baptism date, conference connection, credential status, transition from previous position, education, employment, language proficiency);
2. **Personal character:** relationship to God, to self, to others (theology, confession of faith, Anabaptist/Mennonite distinctive and spiritual development);
3. **Qualifications relating to position and role** (understanding of ministerial role, vision for youth and young adults, missional church understanding, sense of call);
4. **Qualifications relating to task or function** (ranking 20 congregational/pastoral expectations and priorities, pastoral skills and gifts);
5. **Personal needs and preferences** (type of congregation, position preference, housing needs, financial needs, bivocational openness, part-time openness, geographical preferences);
6. **References and legalities** (four references and response to background check questions).

The Denominational Ministry office of Mennonite Church USA gathers and organizes this information for the 21 area conferences and upon request shares MLIs and references with area conference ministers as they help congregations search for pastors and guide conference committees in credentialing ministers.

In the first few years of Mennonite Church USA, conference ministers discussed the lack of standards for education and training of ministers across the 21 area conferences. In 2004, a task force of conference and denominational leaders formed to help bring more clarity to those standards and incorporate missional church learning.

The Ministerial Credentialing and Education Task Force came up with six ministerial competencies to help assess those being considered for ordination in Mennonite Church USA. Ministers are expected to do the following:

1. **Know the biblical story** in content and formation and how the Anabaptist/ Mennonite way of using Scripture in community is unique and be able to preach and teach the biblical story in order to help a congregation be formed by the biblical story and be able to share it with others.
2. **Know the Anabaptist/Mennonite story**, its history and theology in light of the wider church so that the congregation is formed by Anabaptist/Mennonite values and praxis.
3. **Practice a Christian spirituality and discipleship** that nurtures a relationship with God and that helps the congregation be formed by God's love and purposes and increases the capacity to love God and others and invites others.
4. **Have self-understanding, self-awareness and emotional intelligence**. A well-differentiated pastor increases the capacity of a congregation to accept healthy diversity, recognize gifts, express differences, mature in character and welcome new people.
5. **Have contextual awareness** and understand intercultural, interfaith, ecological and global dynamics. A pastor competent to read, learn from and engage ministry context helps the congregation engage its context in healing and hopeful ways and leads the church toward being more welcoming, ecumenical, antiracist and being a sign of God's presence and reign.
6. **Have the capacity to influence others and lead change.** A pastor competent in leadership equips others for ministry, mentors emerging leaders, cultivates a climate of trust and collaboration and helps the congregation discover its purpose and vision and lead it into that vision.

The full description of these competencies is available at www.mennoniteusa.org.

The congregations and many other ministries of Mennonite Church USA are blessed to have many excellent ministers who faithfully guide the church of Jesus Christ during these times of challenge and opportunity. TM

Pivotal times

Summertime has come. School's out for many of us impacted by the annual rhythms of the classroom. Whether we're tracking with our children or a school-related endeavor is the focus of our own work, or even if our work has nothing to do with school, the onset of summer usually means we make space for vacation.

"Summertime … and the livin' is easy. Fish are jumpin', and the cotton is high. Oh—your daddy's rich now. And your mama good lookin'. So hush little baby. Dooooon't you cry."

How well I remember Rob Eby of Rebirth fame crooning that hauntingly beautiful Gershwin lullaby on the Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., stage when I was in college. It always struck me as melancholy and slightly ironic. It seemed both soothing and sad, speaking more of the yearnings of a father to comfort his baby than any arrogance the words themselves might suggest. The minor key and the swaying melody evoked wishful longing even as the words seemed meant to reassure.

The song now evokes memories of becoming a new father and the overwhelming longing I felt to reassure the tiny, vulnerable infant in my arms that I would be there for him, no matter what—and that I would do all in my power, by the grace of God, to create the conditions that would make life "easy" for him, for my beloved wife and for any other children the Lord might give us.

The livin' certainly hasn't been easy. Making life work is a delicate, complex process—requiring far more of me than I could begin to imagine as a young father. I've made plenty of mistakes and have often regretted that my children didn't have a more exemplary father (and my wife a more reliable husband). But there are also plenty of things I've done well. I've never failed to love my children and be ready at a moment's notice to respond to their need for reassuring support. And nearly every day I tell my wife how much I love her, and I have always been faithful to her in that love. Among the ways I've loved them all is by making space, finding resources and investing imagination in expansive time together as a family—on vacation.

I didn't grow up in a family that regularly took vacations. We camped while on our way to church-related meetings or during family camp at Camp Hebron in Pennsylvania. My wife's family, on the other hand, regularly took vacations. Since she and her siblings were often away at boarding school, her parents made a big deal of family vacations. It's as if they were making up for lost time. She tells of vacation trips to various Rift Valley lakes in Ethiopia and of at least annual week-long trips to the Atlantic Ocean—learning to love and respect the mystery of sun, surf and sea.

I determined that vacations would be a regular event for my family. While we lived in Europe, we spent countless magical hours on the Adriatic seacoast and nearby islands, in the Swiss mountains and in travel through eastern and western Europe. After we moved to the Shenandoah Valley, we hiked trails in the Blue Ridge, camped on every Great Lake to and from Mennonite World Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, camped on a trek to the West Coast for a Mennonite Assembly in Eugene, Ore., and enjoyed multiple lake adventures in West Virginia, Kentucky and Virginia, sometimes on a houseboat. More recently, it's been a challenge to get our now dispersed family of six together, but thankfully, my wife's parents long ago established an extended family tradition of renting a house for a week at Sandbridge, Va.—right where my father-in-law used to go swimming after long days working in the vineyard and peach orchards on his family's farm in southern Virginia. Everyone from the extended Chester and Sara Jane Wenger family are invited to come and savor time together. There is no way of calculating the enormous gift their generosity of time and space has meant for the forging of family friendship, faith and fun.

During a time of transition in our immediate family geography and rhythms, I am impressed with new intensity about the importance of planning for vacations and holiday celebrations together—deliberately protecting space and time away from the hurly-burly. As a father and soon-to-be grandfather, I am recommitting myself to carve out times when the livin' can be easy. Time to come away, as Jesus said. Time to laugh and tell stories. Time to revel in God's good creation by splashing and hiking in wild places. Time to enjoy good eating and rowdy family games. Time to sing to high heaven and anoint each other with sunscreen. Time to read and pray—to grieve what we've lost and give thanks for the gifts that are given. Pivotal times when we are there for each other no matter what. TM

Gerald Shenk directs the activities of Abraham's Tent, a center for interfaith engagement at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He plans to move to Elkhart, Ind., this summer.

As a father and soon-to-be grandfather, I am recommitting myself to carve out times when the livin' can be easy.

Against the anthem but for hospitality

Sheldon C. Good is an intern for *Sojourners* in Washington, D.C.

From the beginning, I opposed Goshen (Ind.) College's decision to play the national anthem before select sporting events. Playing the anthem compromises Goshen's institutional values of compassionate peacemaking and global citizenship. But I'm beginning to see how the national anthem discernment process has benefited me, the college and the wider community.

Before discussions about the national anthem began, I didn't think too much about why I don't sing the anthem or put my hand over my heart—movements that skirt too close to devotion (though I do remove my hat and stand).

Although I said the pledge of allegiance every morning while in public elementary school, somewhere along the way, I stopped; I also stopped singing the national anthem.

Thanks to Goshen College, I've now discerned why I don't pledge allegiance to the flag or sing the national anthem. I've engaged in more meaningful conversations—especially with people who think differently—on one's allegiances than I ever did before. And I can more meaningfully articulate the reasons behind why it's so important for me to pledge allegiance to God over country.

Ultimately, the national anthem discernment process has taught me three lessons: how to engage in civil dialogue, celebrate our differences and demonstrate biblical hospitality.

The national anthem discernment process has taught me how to engage in civil dialogue, celebrate our differences and demonstrate biblical hospitality.

Even though I'm still fervently opposed to showing allegiance to an earthly nation over the reign of God (and I believe the national anthem exemplifies this), I acknowledge that not everyone interprets the national anthem as I do. In fact, such interpretive differences allow the body of Christ to come alive.

Who am I, because of my beliefs, to deny someone else the same freedom I experience—to articulate their interpretation of what it means to be patriotic Christians?

Goshen president James E. Brenneman suggests that three questions have emerged as we've engaged in civil dialogue:

1. How should faithful Christians order their allegiances?

2. How do we celebrate the freedoms and opportunities of this country and still challenge injustices that also exist in our midst?

3. And how does a church college retain its historic peace heritage while welcoming an increasingly diverse student body from other traditions?

To the third question, Goshen College is made up of 55 percent Mennonites (and actively seeks people who aren't Mennonite). At the most basic level, playing the national anthem is an act of hospitality for Goshen.

I trust Brenneman when he says he is "committed to retaining the best of what it means to be a Mennonite college while opening the doors wider to all who share our core values." And I will hold him and the entire community to that assertion.

So while I believe the anthem represents being more than patriotic to this country, I've learned through civil dialogue why it is an essential part of patriotism for many people (of faith or not).

As I've learned these differences, I'm excited to celebrate them. I wasn't in Goshen on March 23 as the anthem was played—followed by the peace prayer of St. Francis of Assisi—but I did watch a video of it. The anthem isn't for me, even without lyrics. But St. Francis' prayer is for me.

I thank God for these differences, because I believe that at the heart of peacemaking is the biblical concept of shalom—God's peace—which includes active listening, respect and celebration.

Finally, the question of hospitality. According to Jessica Rose, associated editor of *In Communion*, a quarterly journal from Orthodox Christians, there are three definitions for biblical hospitality, including "hospitality that is built into our shared humanity, which welcomes the stranger for no other reason than this is what is required."

One of my favorite examples of such hospitality comes from Genesis 18, where the LORD appears to Abraham and Sarah. Three angels appear out of nowhere. Abraham and Sarah scramble to prepare food. The angels are prepared to tell their secret—that Sarah will bear a son.

Imagine this: Three angels sit down at a table, but a fourth place is empty. They're making room for me, for you. The hospitality of Abraham and Sarah touches the best of what it means to show hospitality.

So while I continue to oppose playing the national anthem, I affirm president Brenneman's perspective that "the anthem offers a welcoming gesture to many visiting our athletic events, rather than an immediate barrier to further opportunities for getting to know one another."

I look forward to ongoing dialogue as I continue to make peace with the national anthem.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Construction to begin for new MC USA offices

Executive Board schedules consultation on missions and missional church.

The contract for Mennonite Church USA's new office building in Elkhart, Ind., may be $500,000 higher than anticipated. Mennonite Church USA Executive Board (EB) learned of this increase from Bill Hochstetler, board chair of Mennonite Mission Network, during their meeting June 10-12 at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa.

Hochstetler and David Weaver, senior executive for finance at the Mission Network, attended the EB meeting to bring an update on the building plan. Weaver said they selected DJ Construction, the lowest of three bidders, as the general contractor for the building. DJ Construction, Goshen, Ind., also worked on the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) library in Elkhart, so they have experience with LEED-certified building and will work with volunteer labor and donated materials.

According to Weaver, the increase in building costs is due to the economic climate, increased cost of materials, as well as a lower expected savings from the decision to leave the lower level of the building unfinished. This increase required the EB to authorize a loan up to $2.1 million—up from the $1.5 million they authorized at the EB meetings in February in Hampton, Va.

Hochstetler said the Mission Network recognized the final decision is up to the EB; they would be disappointed if the plan did not continue but they would also be at peace.

After more than an hour of discussion, the EB approved the following recommendation: to proceed with the ground blessing on June 15 (see photo at right), sign the construction contract, authorize the increased loan amount and implement a plan for a debt-free outcome.

Before they voted, the EB discussed how to respond to opposing voices—such as Spark Renewal—a group of individuals asking for the project to be put on hold because they question how it aligns with Mennonite Church USA's missional priorities. Marty Lehman, associate executive director for churchwide operations, and executive director Ervin Stutzman have met with this group's leaders in the past month.

In order to acknowledge and address these concerns, the EB also voted to authorize 10 percent of the new building funds raised after June 15 until the end of the campaign to be used for racial/ethnic people's concerns. Stutzman, who brought this proposal to the board, plans to work with Glen Guyton in developing a plan for this money. Guyton is the associate executive director for constituent resourcing.

The EB also discussed its response to the Yutzy recommendation on Mennonite Mission Network with Hochstetler. The recommendation called for the integration of Executive Leadership and Mennonite Mission Network. But Stutzman said the EB does not assume that outcome.

The heart of the recommendation, according to Stutzman, is a consultation on the role of a mission program agency in a missional church scheduled for Sept. 7-8 at AMBS. The EB and Leaders Forum will address findings from this consultation at their meeting Sept. 23-24 in Pittsburgh.

"This is cutting-edge work," Stutzman said. "As far as we know, there is no group that has looked at this question. There's been a lot of missional church teaching … but as far as we know we are the first and perhaps only denomination that says we are going to be a missional church as a denomination."

Hochstetler said the Mission Network board and executive cabinet support this plan.

Guyton told the EB that participants at the Leaders Forum will also address whether or not to meet in Phoenix for convention 2013 because of Arizona's new immigration law. Guyton said he hopes the church will also consider how to support Hispanic churches long term in addition to this decision.

The EB also appointed Kenneth Thompson, pastor of Friendship Community Church in Bronx, N.Y., to the board. Thompson was a Grace and Truth columnist in *The Mennonite*.—*Anna Groff*

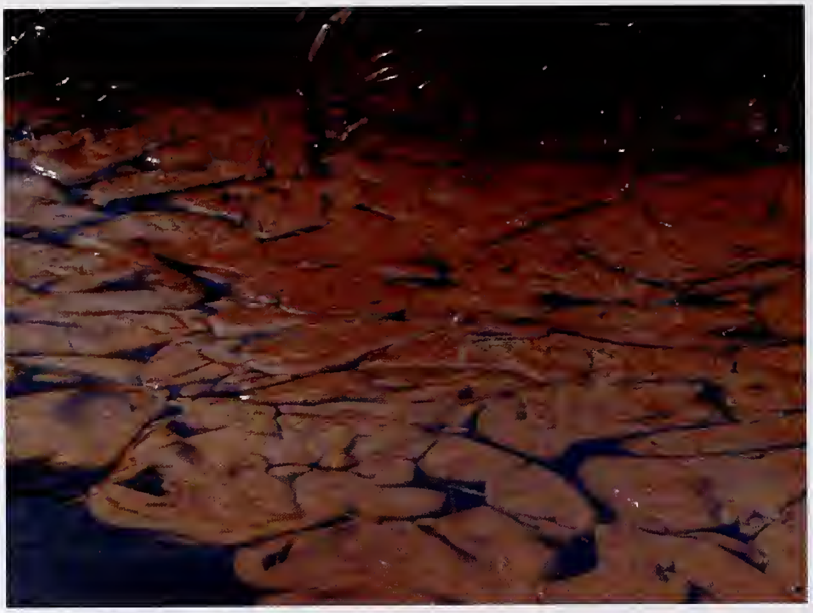
Rebecca Helmuth

From left, Wilbur Bontrager of Middlebury, Ind.; Peter Graber, campaign director, and pastor Cora Brown prepare a tree to plant at the new Elkhart, Ind., offices building site on June 15. The ground blessing took place outside the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary chapel due to wet conditions at the building site.

Disaster leaders 'see the oil'

Plaquemines Parish fishers out of work hope to be hired for cleanup by BP.

Ani Philippe-Cortez



Oil in the marsh of Plaquemines Parish, La.

Maurice Phillips, a commercial fisher of Plaquemines Parish, La., took a group of disaster management leaders out on a small boat to "see the oil" on June 7. This is the best way to witness the destruction of the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill, members of the Grand Bayou told Paul Unruh of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Unruh led the group as part of a listening tour.

After a 30-minute boat ride from homes built by MDS on the Grand Bayou, the group came to where shiny brown oil covers the banks of the marsh and Bay Baptiste. The Gulf of Mexico surrounds Plaquemines Parish, and the Mississippi River runs through it.

At places, the group detected the oil's odor, and they could make out a sheen on the water as well as orange residue on the top of the two- to three-feet-deep water.

Booms set up along portions of the bank absorbed some of the oil. But according to Phillips, this action came too late to prevent the oil from devastating the seafood industry and the livelihood of individuals in the Parish. Just five years ago these same families lost their homes because of Hurricane Katrina.

Since the spill on April 20, the Environmental Protection Agency gradually closed the waters for fishing and shrimping, and now almost all waters are closed to fishers.

"Usually this time of the year," Phillips said, "there would be 100 shrimping boats out." That morning, the boat for the listening tour was the only one.

The previous night, at Paul Sylve's home on the Bayou, Phillips described a pelican he had found covered in oil—as thick as syrup—in the water. He took the bird into his boat and delivered it to the pelican rescue at Fort Jackson, La.

Sylve, another fisher and an assistant pastor, said a friend of his went outside federal waters—which are unsprayed by dispersants—put his arm in the water and into at least a foot of oil that felt like Jello.

Phillips said the dispersants used by BP only "[sink] the oil," and it still damages the marsh and wildlife.

At the moment, the homes in the Bayou remain unaffected by the oil.

"When you have wind and high tides, banks will be covered," Phillips said. "I think they should have more people picking up the oil."

According to Phillips and other fishers, BP has no shortage of people who know the waters and a are willing to do the work.

James Trabeau, a fisher, finished eight hours of training with BP and is ready at any time, but he has yet to receive a call.

"I'm just sitting and waiting until my turn," he said. "I really need to work bad."

Fortunately, Trabeau did receive a $5,000 check for his losses for the month from BP. But that amount falls dramatically short of what he usually makes during a month of shrimping season—five or six times that amount.

Thuong Nguyen (see page 39), who has fished the waters for 20 years, also waited for a call from BP when the group spoke with him on June 7. While the money may not be as good as shrimping, he said, BP pays $2,000 a day to large boat

Anna Groff

Maurice Phillips takes the group to see the oil.

Rosina Philippe gave a cluster of marsh grasses to each member of the group to remember the Bayou.

captain like himself. Smaller boats were able to shrimp closer to the shore, where the oil has yet to reach. His larger boat must go out farther, and those waters are restricted. On June 8, Nguyen received a call from BP. He will start his first day of clean-up on June 14.

The listening tour group also met with a group of 11 pastors from the area who described their concerns with the spill as well as expressed their faith in God.

Reverend Ted Turner, from a church in Boothville, La., said many young people in the Grand Bayou and Venice, La., learned to fish from their parents, who learned from their parents and on back.

"This is all we've ever done, and we don't want to do anything else," Turner said. The last thing these families want—post-Katrina—is to have to leave the parish, find a new job and a new way of life that does not allow them to eat much of what they catch.

Paul Sylve's wife, Carolyn, said she buys few groceries because they eat so much of what they fish.

"We live off the land," she said the night before the tour in her home built by MDS. Referring to the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, she said, "In Alaska, people committed suicides, families broke up. ... Where does that leave the children?"

Carolyn and Paul's 11-year-old daughter Jeanne said she will cry if she goes out to see the oil in the marsh.

"This Bayou is a great place, and God created it for us," she said with tears. "Hopefully they'll find a way to stop this oil."

Another member of the Bayou community, Rosina Philippe, described the spill as a "product of greed." (Her daughter took the photo on page 38.) "This is something we haven't faced before," she said. "It's a new enemy."

The group also visited the Plaquemines Parish government office. Benny Puckett, grant administrator for the Parish and chairman of Committee of Plaquemines Recovery, told the group that what is sadder than the waters closed to fishing is the threatened reputation of seafood from Louisiana.

"Overcoming that will probably be a more difficult task," Puckett said. He also described what he calls "human collateral damage"—for example, the deck hands paid under the table who cannot prove to BP that they have a legitimate claim since they lack the required documentation.

"They're not able to show they're impacted," he said. This may offer the place for faith-based organizations to step in, he said, as opposed to volunteering on site.

"We appreciate [volunteers'] passion and desire," he told the leaders, "but we have people that are unemployed that we want to keep employed as long as possible. ... Let's find something else."

Puckett also described the lack of control the local parish government has in the clean-up process.

Later on June 7, Unruh and Jerry Klassen of MDS provided a collaborated statement regarding a possible MDS response to the spill: "Because of the ongoing, unfinished disaster that's unfolding and the need for support in the community, our best channel may be to return to our building program, let our hammers ring hope while we continue to listen to other opportunities to respond."

Klassen said the fact that the oil continues to leak into the Gulf also affects the timing of a response.

"This is the longest, ongoing disaster I've ever worked on," he said.

The tour included participants from Church World Service, United Church of Christ, Southern Mutual Help Association, Lutheran Disaster Relief and MDS.—*Anna Groff*

Anna Groff

By his fishing boat in Venice, La., Thuong Nguyen, left, talks with Jerry Klassen of MDS.

Reverse polarity, bomb or profiling?

Mennonite Church USA executive closes Newark, N.J., terminal.

Ryan Miller

Mennonite Mission Network executive director Stanley Green with his laptop computer in the Elkhart, Ind., office

Stanley Green, executive director for Mennonite Mission Network, may have been a target because of his race and ethnicity on April 27. Regardless whether he was or was not, the incident closed a terminal at the Newark International Airport for three hours.

"My South African citizenship in itself did not seem to be the issue," Stanley said on May 20. "But they did ask, 'Are you a citizen of this country?' 'When and how did you become a citizen?' I am told I look like a Jordanian, and this makes it more problematic for me."

It all began with his laptop computer as he attempted to go through the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) line for his early morning flight.

"I entered the TSA security line at 5:10 a.m.," Green said. "At 5:15 a.m. I was asked if the computer in the screening machine was mine. I said, 'Yes it is.' At that point I was requested not to touch my bags but to go to the screening table.

"At the table every item in both my suitcase and my backpack were taken out and examined. … Meanwhile the TSA personnel called the manager on duty to look at the scan of my computer. They ran it a few times and seemed perturbed. They called for someone higher up in the TSA chain of command. He examined the scan and ran the computer through a few more times."

The scrutiny escalated. Eventually the entire terminal was evacuated and all flights were cancelled.

More security forces arrived, including four bomb sniffing dogs, 16 TSA officers, four bomb disposal staff and eight police officers.

During Green's two-hour detention, in three different locations, he was interviewed by the TSA, FBI, Port Authority Police Department, canine unit, bomb squad, Essex County (N.J.) Sheriff's Department and Essex County Detective Unit.

The incident was also traumatic for many others who missed their flights.

"A parade of people went by," Green said, "some nervous and anxious and obviously in a hurry to get clear of the area of the bomb scare, some frustrated and angry, and one, whom I couldn't help feel guilty about, weeping and sobbing—she was not going to make it to wherever she was headed. I imagined, A wedding? A job interview? A funeral of a loved one? Who could tell, other than to know that it messed up more than her schedule and her day?"

At one point Green was afraid the bomb disposal squad would blow up his computer.

"Minimally, I thought they (would) need to detonate the computer," Green said, "to justify the enormous cost to the airport, the airlines and the various people that were affected. They (could not) just close up my computer and say, 'Sorry, it was nothing.'"

Three hours later, after Green got rebooked on a later flight and made it to his seat on the plane, he began to record his experience:

"As I write this, a passenger next to me is on the phone to his office announcing that he will arrive at 11:30 a.m. instead of 8 a.m. When I got to my seat, the couple behind me were talking about the delay and inconvenience caused by the bomb scare. The wife responded to her husband's frustration by saying, 'That guy should be taken out and shot.' Wow. I guess I should be glad to be alive. When I look up, the flight attendants are talking about it and the trouble it caused. I sit there quietly hoping that no one will notice that I was the guy who occasioned all their problems (or it was my computer), while another part of me wants to say, 'OK folks, I am the guy. What should I have done differently?'

"It is truly a helpless feeling when you are blamed for something you did not intentionally initiate/cause. I do aspire to impact people's lives—but I never thought of it happening in this way."

Since nothing problematic was found with the computer, Green pondered whether his experience may have been re-

$50,000 gift for those who planned 2009 assembly

Eight conferences in Paraguay agree to divide the money, $6,250 for each.

Presidents of the eight Mennonite conferences who together hosted Paraguay 2009 have decided to share equally a $50,000 gift from Mennonite World Conference. MWC officers decided last October to use part of a positive fund balance following the global assembly to express gratitude to the Paraguayans for their generous hospitality. Danisa Ndlovu, MWC president, and Larry Miller, MWC general secretary, sent a letter to the presidents of the conferences to inform them of the $50,000 gift, giving the conferences the freedom to decide how to use it.

The people who had worked together to plan the assembly had finished their work, so it became the responsibility of the conference leaders to decide how to use the money. Ernst Bergen, MWC treasurer from Asunción, Paraguay, asked Theodor Unruh to initiate contact with the other leaders.

"It was not very easy to come to a common accord, but we tried to do it in the best way possible," said Unruh. "Each conference leader talked about the gift and its use in his respective conference board."

The eight leaders, from diverse conferences, had different ideas. They did not meet, but there were many calls and a lot of talking among them, Unruh said.

In the end, they agreed to split the money equally, with each conference receiving $6,250. Five of the conferences decided to use half their share for their own projects and pool the other half to support Rancho Alegre, a camp about 50 kilometers east of Asunción. It is the one institution the five conferences own jointly. They use the camp for retreats for schools, youth, other church groups and Christian institutions.

Spanish-speaking churches in East Paraguay use the camp a lot for retreats and church-related events.

Each of the three participating indigenous conferences, which were particularly moved by the gift, will use their $6,250 for their own projects, yet to be announced.

"We want to say thank you for the good gesture of MWC for sending this gift to the Paraguayan conferences," said Unruh. "It is a recognition for the work and effort that the churches and conferences put into planning and preparing for the [global] assembly."

The eight hosting conferences and their leaders are Convención Evangélica Hermanos Menonitas Enlhet (Walter Ortiz); Convención Iglesias Evangélicas Hermanos Menonitas Nivaclé (Inocencio Galván); Convención de las Iglesias Evangélicas Unida—Enlhet (Nenito Vins); Vereinigung des Mennonitengemeinden von Paraguay (Ferdinand Friesen); Convención Evangélica de Iglesias Paraguayas Hermanos Menonitas (Juan Silverio Verón); Convención Evangélica Menonita Paraguaya (Alfred Klassen); Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft (Arnold Boschmann) and Vereinigung der Mennoniten Brüdergemeinden Paraguays (Theodor Unruh).—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference*

Reverse polarity, bomb or profiling? (continued)

lated to racial profiling and was willing to share about his experience so others might know what some immigrants experience in the United States.

The reason given for the suspicions about the laptop: It was wired incorrectly, and the polarity (positive and negative current) was backward. But the manufacturer refuted that possibility.

Grant Martin, areawide network administrator for Mennonite Missions Network, contacted Dell, the computer manufacturer. According to Martin, Dell was not happy to hear about the situation.

"We spoke with our account representative … the week of the incident," Martin said on May 20. "We asked him about Stanley's model of laptop. Is it a low seller? Is it different in any way from other laptops they sell? …With the exception of the tablet features, it is exactly like another model of which they have sold thousands and thousands around the world. … There is nothing unique about Stanley's laptop or battery. They are both standard issue."

"Dell's response to TSA's [reason] was that the batteries for that model of laptop are not wired differently than any other battery they sell," Martin said, "and that if the polarity on the battery was reversed, the laptop would not even start."

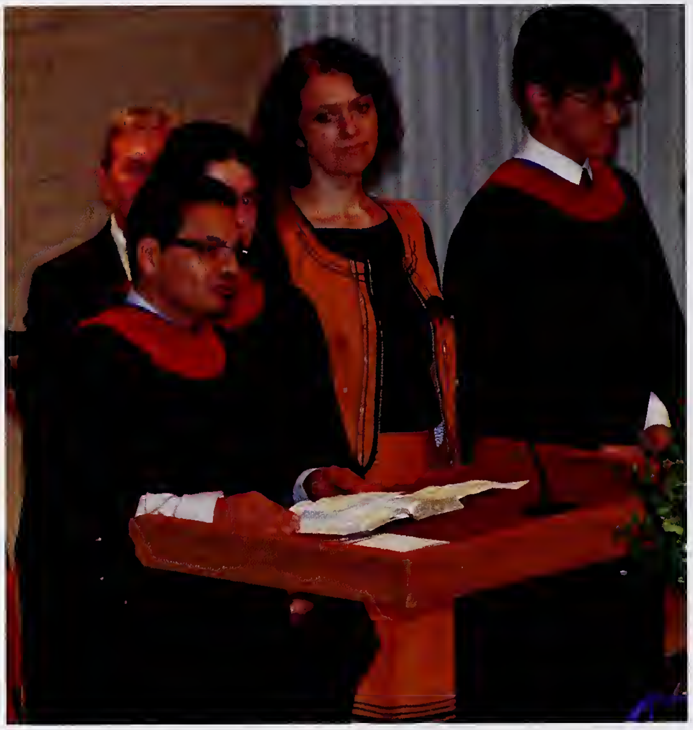
But on May 25, a TSA spokesperson reported a different reason for Green's detention and the evacuation of the terminal.

"The laptop alarmed twice for the presence of explosives," said Ann Davis, who represents TSA's northeast U.S. region. "Two alarms would require us to follow our protocols. Green's personal property also alarmed. … False positives do occur."

Davis said the TSA attempted to resolve the alarm but was not able to do so. Finally, the Essex County Sherriff's Department was able to resolve the alarm, but Davis did not know how they resolved the alarm. The Essex County Sherriff's Department did not respond to three requests for an explanation. —*Everett J. Thomas*

AMBS graduates 40 seminarians

C. Arnold Snyder says Anabaptist Vision must be refocused.


Mary E. Klassen

Texts from Matthew 7 and Luke 11 were read in six languages during the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary commencement service May 22 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Readers were Kelbessa Muleta Demena from Ethiopia, who read in Amharic, Raimonda Balciuniene in Lithuanian, Rolando Sosa Granados in Spanish (at the microphone), Samantha Lioi in English, Sylvie Guden Koehn in French and Takanori Inoue in Japanese.

Voices in six languages set the stage for the commencement service of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 22, just one day before Pentecost.

Members of the graduating class read in their first languages the call in Matthew 7 and Luke 11 to care for others the way God does (see photo). These six were part of the class of 40 who received degrees and certificates in the afternoon service.

C. Arnold Snyder, professor of history at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., challenged the graduating class by suggesting that the Anabaptist vision, set forth in H. S. Bender's classic essay in 1944, must be significantly refocused. Bender's essay proposed three key characteristics of Anabaptism: the essence of Christianity is discipleship, the church is to be a fellowship of believers, and believers are marked by new ethic of love and nonresistance.

However, Snyder pointed out, the "Anabaptist vision is not Anabaptist enough." A life of discipleship, being committed to other believers and caring for others requires a spiritual rebirth and "calls for the continued gift of God's grace."

Snyder noted that Bender himself, in an article published in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* in 1961, said, "A life of discipleship is one in which the Holy Spirit works with power." Snyder indicated that he wished this last article, published just before Bender's death, would receive as much attention as the earlier one, because it is in this later document that Bender answers the central question of how one becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ.

"This cannot be accomplished without prayer, meditation on Scripture and cultivation of our relationship with the Vine," Snyder said. "Take time to ponder the truth expressed by Anabaptist faith parents. Have a heart open to the living God. Then we can go forth in the confidence that we can indeed give not a stone but bread to those who hunger."

Nineteen graduates received the Master of Divinity degree, which prepares people for ministry in a variety of settings. Five received the Master of Arts: Theological Studies, three the Master of Arts: Peace Studies, four the Master of Arts in Christian Formation, and nine received certificates in theological studies.

Three of those who received certificates completed the Seminario Bíblico Anabautista program in Dallas and were honored at an earlier ceremony: Oneida Dueñas of Ferris, Texas; Samuel Moran, pastor of Ministerios Restauracion, Portland, Ore.; and Blanca Vargas, pastor of Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida, San Antonio, Texas.

Eighteen of the 40 graduates are pastors or are pursuing pastoral ministry assignments. Six will pursue further graduate studies; four are involved in chaplaincy ministry or are entering Clinical Pastoral Education programs. Others are providing pastoral counseling, spiritual guidance and bilingual therapy, are involved in area church and service agencies or are pursuing international ministries.

The Anabaptist Vision is not Anabaptist enough. … Have a heart open to the living God.
—C. Arnold Snyder

AMBS is a seminary of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

89 students in Bethel College commencement

Class of 2010 comes from 14 states and five countries outside United States.

Melanie Zuercher

At Bethel College, in North Newton, Kan., graduating seniors touch a threshing stone as they prepare to receive their diplomas; from left, Esther Wanyoike, Nairobi, Kenya; Shawn Sullivan, Hutchinson, Kan.; and Laura Stevens, McPherson, Kan.

The thunderstorm passed to the north, and Bethel College's 117th commencement exercises proceeded outdoors in Thresher Stadium, North Newton, Kan., for the third year. A few sprinkles fell on faculty, graduates and audience, and a gusty wind kept whipping mortarboards off graduates' heads as they listened to commencement speaker Aziza Hasan give them five ways to "leverage learning opportunities."

Hasan, of Los Angeles, is a graduate of Halstead (Kan.) High School and Bethel College, the first of four siblings to attend the college (two are also graduates and one is currently a student). Their father, the late Farouq Hasan, studied at Bethel in the 1970s. Hasan's sister, two brothers, mother Christine Hasan of Halstead and many extended family members were present to hear her address the Bethel audience.

As southern California director of government relations for the Muslim Public Affairs Council and co-director of NewGround, a project that seeks to foster communication, respect and understanding among Jews and Muslims, Hasan is an interfaith communicator who "exemplifies in her life and profession Bethel's core values," said interim president John Sheriff in his introduction. "She is a graduate of whom Bethel is very proud."

"I'm humbled by this great honor [of speaking to you today]," Hasan said. "It's so good to be back at the place that has left its imprint on my life and work."

She opened her address with the familiar story of "a commander-in-chief" berated, after praising the opposition, by someone who asked, "How dare you speak well of them? You should destroy our enemies." The commander replied: "Do I not destroy my enemy by making him my friend?"

"No matter how big or small the conflicts in our lives," whether wars fought across the globe or disagreements within families, Hasan said, "they're always going to be there.

"It's simple—what has really helped me most since leaving Bethel has been leveraging learning opportunities," she said. "Challenges can pull you back or they can motivate you."

She concluded by returning to the story of the commander-in-chief. That was Abraham Lincoln, she said, speaking of the Confederacy to an audience of Union supporters.

"You turn the other cheek when you have power, not when you are weak," she said. "The Koran says that evil and good are not equal. Use what is good to repel the evil."

Also as part of the commencement ceremonies, vice president for academic affairs Brad Born presented the Ralph P. Schrag Distinguished Teaching Award to professor of music William Eash. The award goes to a faculty member that the academic dean's office judges, based on both peer and student evaluations, to have made an outstanding contribution to teaching at Bethel College.

Eash is director of choral activities at Bethel College, where he is responsible for four choirs and also teaches conducting and music history.

Sheriff conferred 37 bachelor of arts and 52 bachelor of science degrees. According to a survey of graduating seniors, 35 of the graduates intend to enter health- and social service-related careers, 22 business and 10 education. Of those who responded to the survey, 44 percent plan either to enter or apply to graduate school within the next five years. At least three will follow a Bethel tradition of taking voluntary service assignments soon after graduation. The class of 2010 comes from 14 states and five countries in addition to the United States: Cameroon, China, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*

Honorable discharge for conscientious objection

Military Counseling Network offers information and counsel to U.S. soldiers.

J.T.* joined the military as a last resort. After both his parents passed away—his father in a car accident and his mother from a drug overdose—J.T. moved in with his grandparents.

Mere months later, his grandmother passed away, and his grandfather died by suicide. With no one left, J.T. joined the military at age 18.

This was a decision he would later come to regret and one that prompted him, in the midst of depression and stress, to contact the Military Counseling Network for help. With the help of MCN, J.T. received an honorable discharge from the armed services on May 15.

In his work with the Military Counseling Network, Daniel Hershberger is usually involved with multiple cases like J.T.'s at any given time. His job is to provide information and counsel to U.S. service members who wish to receive a discharge from the military or learn more about their rights.

But in early 2010, Hershberger found himself particularly struck by J.T.'s case. Hershberger, who serves with MCN through Mennonite Mission Network, spoke with J.T. about his options.

"As I talked with J.T. in person and on the phone many times," Hershberger said, "his story began to break my heart.

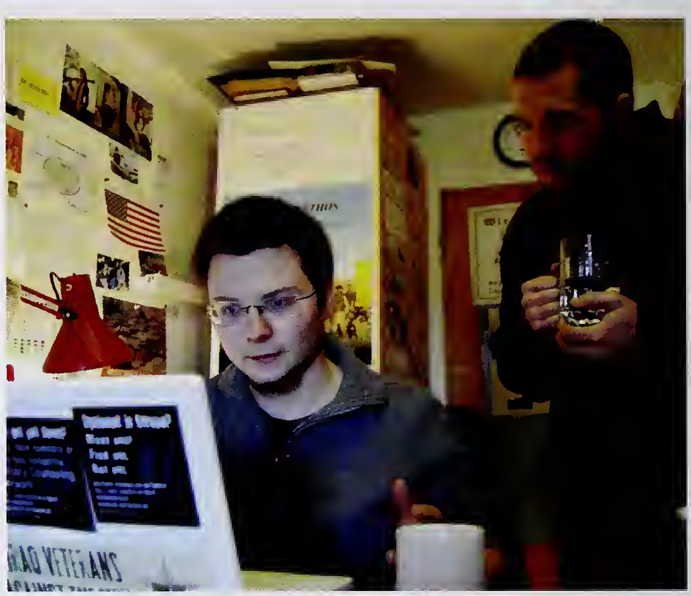
"Here was a young man who had lost all those important to him and saw the military as his only chance to make something of his life. Admittedly somewhat naive, he did not know what he was getting himself into."

At target practice he found himself unable to fire at the human-shaped targets. The more it became clear what it meant to be an infantryman, the more depressed he became.

As they talked, J.T. expressed his many misgivings about the military. He didn't like the culture within his unit, as his buddies bragged about their drug, sex and alcohol-fueled escapades.

But even more so as they joked about being killers. J.T. knew that he stood for values contrary to those of the military. At target practice he found himself unable to fire at the human-shaped targets. The more it became clear what it meant to be an infantryman, the more depressed he became.

In these moments, explained Hershberger, J.T. realized that he was a part of something he could not be a part of.


Military Counseling Network

Daniel Hershberger (right) and Marius van Hoogstraten at work in the Military Counseling Network office.

Even though he knew he needed to get out, he didn't know what to do. It was then that he searched for help and found MCN.

At first, Hershberger and J.T. discussed his options for getting a discharge based on depression and anxiety. But as they continued to talk, J.T.'s budding conscientious objector beliefs surfaced.

Hershberger and MCN helped walk him through the process to leave the military. As part of the conscientious objection process, J.T. underwent analysis with a psychologist, and it was during this analysis that the depth of his emotional and mental issues were finally acknowledged.

"J.T.'s discharge, in the end, was not for conscientious objection," Hershberger said, "but this all happened through him pursuing a CO discharge, as that was the route he wanted to go. The discharge was honorable, which is really the most important part, as other discharges negatively affect benefits and future job possibilities."

The Military Counseling Network is a nonprofit organization that provides information and counseling to members of the armed services. It is supported by a variety of churches, individuals, and other organizations, including the German Mennonite Church.—*Melanie Hess of Mennonite Mission Network*

**Note: A pseudonym is used in the article at the request of the subject.*

MCC plans for global change

Mennonite Central Committee leaders aim to include diverse groups.

Mennonite Central Committee is changing how it does its work but not the work itself. That's how Arli Klassen, MCC executive director, described MCC's process of streamlining and shifting areas of responsibility among its member organizations.

Klassen shared the current models for those changes—which she said are set in gelatin—at the June 11-12 meeting of MCC's binational delegate body in Akron, Pa.

"If there's enough heat, they can melt, and we can reform them," she said.

Since January, a joint board team—with representatives from the MCC U.S., Canada and binational boards—has been providing overall leadership to design and transition teams that are proposing changes for the New Wineskins process. They are basing their ideas on MCC's New Wine consultations, which involved more than 2,000 people from 50 countries and finished in June 2009.

One of the teams' ideas is to shift much of the binational organization's work to MCC U.S. and MCC Canada. MCC would create a council to coordinate strategic planning and decide which proportion of funds different continents and programs would receive. It would receive authority from its member agencies.

The joint board team is proposing that MCC Canada and MCC U.S. operate the international program together. The teams are receiving feedback and will seek full approval in 2011 from all of the boards for proposed changes. MCC expects most major changes to happen in 2012.

Meaning of global: Proposals suggest the council's board be composed of three people from MCC Canada, three from MCC U.S. and three from Mennonite World Conference (MWC), as well as two members at large.

Amid these changes, MCC is looking at what it means to be global beyond the fact that it works in 60 countries.

MCC is one of 30 service agencies participating in the Global Anabaptist Service Consultation Aug. 6-9 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event will explore the level of interest in developing a global service forum, network or other entity of MWC member churches and related groups.

Larry Miller, MWC general secretary, identified some of the questions the consultation may address.

"Should other Mennonite churches around the world join MCC?" Miller said. "Or should MCC in North America and the other churches do something new together?"

Pakisa Tshimika, MWC global church advocate, who is coordinating the consultation, said no single entity is asking others to join it but that the consultation will be a chance for MCC to have more global input in how it is governed.

"It has nothing to do with MCC and everything to do with MCC," Tshimika said of the consultation. "MCC is on a journey of how they listen to the rest of the world, but it's becoming more than just listening."

Anabaptists from around the world have been increasingly participating in funding MCC's work: MCC had a considerable increase in the past year in donations from countries outside Canada and the United States without fund-raising for that money. For example, $1,300 for work in Haiti came from 14 Brethren in Christ congregations in Zimbabwe.

Donations for MCC's response to the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti have reached nearly $14 million, making it MCC's largest response in one nation.

Link to denominations: In planning for change, MCC is also looking at its connection to denominations in North America. Mennonite Church USA has stated that it wants to be able to appoint members directly to the council board.

This raises two issues, Klassen said. First, the new MCC system needs to have accountability among the boards, which is why transition planners are suggesting the MCC Canada and MCC U.S. boards each appoint three members.

Second, those six seats don't accommodate the 14 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations currently on the U.S., Canada and binational boards, let alone the higher number of denominations that participate at some level in MCC's regional and provincial work.

"We are serving in the name of Christ as an arm of the church," Klassen said. "We want to continue to remain connected to as many of the diverse Mennonite groups as we can."

Theological diversity: Theological diversity among those denominations has raised concerns for some. As the MCC delegate body met June 12, members of Sommerfeld Mennonite Church of Manitoba were holding an informational meeting about their participation in MCC. Members of the group have expressed concerns to MCC in recent months about theological issues.

"They relate specifically to MCC's interfaith bridgebuilding and the perceived implications of that," said Don Peters, MCC Canada executive director. "The question, Is Jesus the only way? is one they would express.

MCC's theology is the theology of the churches participating in it, Peters said. MCC adopted MWC's "Shared Convictions" as its faith statement.

"It doesn't answer the question, Is Jesus the only way?" Peters said. "What it does say is that Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Savior. Jesus is reconciler, and we as Christians are agents of the reconciler and agents of reconciliation as we witness to Jesus."—*Celeste Kennel-Shank, assistant editor of* Mennonite Weekly Review, *for Meetinghouse*

Schools not in The Corinthian Plan

Extra expense for higher education institutions would not reduce pastors' costs.

At a benefits board meeting May 20–21, it was announced that the Mennonite Educators Benefit Plan (MEBP) has decided not to purchase reinsurance through The Corinthian Plan, Mennonite Church USA's new health benefits plan. (Reinsurance is another level of insurance that protects primary insurance plans from major medical claims.)

MEBP, a self-funded insurance plan administered by Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA), includes Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; Bluffton (Ohio) University; Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; Goshen (Ind.) College; Hesston (Kan.) College and Mennonite Education Agency (MEA).

"Reinsuring through The Corinthian Plan would have increased the complexity for the administration of MEBP," says Carlos Romero, executive director of MEA. "It would also have increased MEBP's costs by $85,000 a year without a reduction in the cost of insurance to pastors.

"Balancing this against our commitment to and support of Mennonite Church USA and the goals of The Corinthian Plan made discerning this decision a struggle," Romero says. "MEBP was founded for the same reasons that gave birth to The Corinthian Plan—each institution's deep commitment to mutual aid—so we spent a significant amount of time considering the implications of joining."

Keith Harder, director of The Corinthian Plan, says that this would have been an opportunity to bring these two unique plans together in order to share risk. He noted that the decision will not affect the long-term viability of the plan.

"For MEBP to come under the umbrella of The Corinthian Plan would have been significant enough that it was certainly worth considering; it was more than just a symbolic exercise," says Harder. "But by the same token, doing this wasn't a 'make it or break it' for either plan. It was just a way of adding more strength and more critical mass and, I think, more awareness that we really were committed to doing this together."

Mennonite Mutual Aid's preliminary financial models suggested that obtaining reinsurance through the plan would result in no extra costs to MEBP except for a per-month administrative fee.

However, analysts discovered after more research that the move would most likely result in additional costs at a time when the institutions are trying to find ways to shore up budget shortfalls.

Harder says that while the decision is disappointing for him, he appreciates how the heads of each institution carefully considered whether the plan was financially realistic.

"I want to applaud and affirm how much they have invested in this," says Harder, "and that they really did seriously consider what it would mean for them to bring their plan under The Corinthian Plan. I respect the decision that they made, even though I wished it could have been different."

The Corinthian Plan is a mutual aid insurance plan of Mennonite Church USA that went into effect at the beginning of this year. The project was undertaken after delegates at the MC USA convention in 2007 called for the denomination's Executive Board to create a plan under which all Mennonite pastors could have basic health insurance.

A total of 453 congregations and conferences—including 503 credentialed employees and 75 noncredentialed employees—are participating. Also included are employees of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Mutual Aid, *The Mennonite* and the Mennonite Association of Schools and Camps.

One component of the plan is the Fair Balance Fund, through which participating congregations pay $10 per attendee to help subsidize health insurance costs for congregations with fewer resources.

Fifty-six congregations are receiving more than $400,000 in assistance through this fund.—*Andrew Clouse and Rachel Nussbaum Eby*

Corinthian Plan representatives named

Three part-time area representatives and one part-time wellness information coordinator have been appointed to serve The Corinthian Plan, the health insurance plan of Mennonite Church USA. They will join Keith Harder, the plan's director.

The area representatives (.2 FTE) will attend the annual sessions of area conferences and other gatherings in their regions. They will be available to answer questions, help connect participants with resources and assist congregations with re-enrollment in the fall. They also will listen for stories and prayer requests that could be shared via the plan's Web site (www.thecorinthianplan.org). The representatives are Joe Christophel of Goshen, Ind., Mark Fly of Souderton, Pa., and Duncan Smith of Beaverton, Ore.

Ingrid Friesen Moser of Goshen, Ind., will serve all regions as a consultant in wellness/health stewardship support and promotion (.2 FTE), maintaining the plan's Web site and providing newsletters on wellness. The new benefits board is providing oversight of The Corinthian Plan as well as the Mennonite Retirement Trust.—*Annette Brill Bergstresser*

Mennonite women in conversation

Participants like to 'become more vulnerable and be who we truly are.'

Dazzling in their varying shades and hues on two Saturday evenings this spring, women across Mennonite Church USA expressed their gratitude for mothers and sisters and daughters, for husbands and fathers, friends, love and loss, sorrows and successes through stories and anecdotes.

The first gathering was held April 9-11 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. The second gathering was at Cross Wind Retreat Center, Hesston, Kan., April 30-May 2. The celebrations—dubbed "Closet Couture" and "Hues of Gratitude"—marked crowning moments of Women in Conversation. Jointly sponsored by Mennonite Women USA and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, the two events collectively attracted close to 300 women for dialogue, networking, retreat and renewal.

Sarah Shirk from Highville, Pa., described the clothing and accessories attendees wore to the banquet at Laurelville as "vehicles to draw out experiences," prompting women to exchange memories associated with old prom dresses, extravagant hats, jewelry and such.

"It was a blast," said Shirk. "It turned out to be one of the most meaningful times of sharing from the entire weekend."

Megan Ramer, pastor at Chicago Community Mennonite Church, served as keynote speaker for both weekends, addressing the theme "Living a Life of Gratitude." Participants also enjoyed a variety of workshops ranging in content from weighty subjects such as living with cancer and understanding one's sexuality to the more playful, such as laughter and line dancing.

For her part, Ramer encouraged the women who were present to be more attentive to God's grace and presence in everyday circumstances, to be willing to wrestle with God in pursuit of God's blessing and to recognize the difference between gratitude and happiness.

"Living a life of gratitude does not equal living a life of happiness," said Ramer. "Gratitude runs much deeper than (happiness). Gratitude precedes happiness, grounds happiness, and stays long after happiness has gone."

In a workshop at Laurelville, Sue Conrad and Jen Helmuth Shenk celebrated the spiritual discipline of laughter. Conrad, associate pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., identified laughter as essential to one's life journey.

"It's one way of celebrating who we are," she said, pointing to the spectrum of emotions and their accompanying expressions. "We need to let people cry when they need to cry, let people be angry when they feel angry and then let them laugh … and be gracious enough to laugh with them."

Brian Paff/Laurelville

Laurelville Women in Conversation participants share laughter during a workshop led by Jen Helmuth Shenk and Sue Conrad.

At the Hesston gathering, Sandra Montes-Martinez guided a workshop in Spanish centered on the disposition of contentment and finding hope amid struggle. The bilingual offering attempted to accommodate an increasingly multicultural portrait of women in Mennonite Church USA (Spanish translation was offered throughout the Hesston retreat).

Celebrated at the heart of the retreat, however, was a community of women engaged in conversation, mutual support and celebration.

"There is something powerful about a group of women coming together—an unspoken understanding and camaraderie—where we are in this really safe environment where we can become more vulnerable and be who we truly are," said Conrad.

Cyneatha Millsaps, who pastors at Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., was delighted to retreat from her role as minister and engage fully in the retreat.

"I could just come and be Cyneatha," she said, "and fellowship with other women as a woman."

For Kristi Winings, the retreat was a gift, literally. Friends pooled their resources to cover her travel expenses and registration and even arranged child care to enable the mother of three and wife of a church plant pastor to journey from her home in Colfax, Wis., to the Hesston gathering.

"It was so nice to have people share about serious struggles and relate how God had provided contentment in the midst of (those experiences)," she said.

The next Women in Conversation retreats will take place in 2012.—*Patricia Burdette of Mennonite Women USA and Brian Paff of Laurelville Mennonite Church Center*

'I never thought I'd be a landowner'

CPI provides housing and educational opportunities for rural Hondurans.

Horacio Cardenes, 36, grins from ear to ear. His is one of 11 peasant families in a rural hillside village in northern Honduras that has just taken title to their first real house—a cement-block, two-bedroom abode that is, in his eyes, a mansion compared to what they now live in.

"I never thought I would be a landowner," the father of four says, explaining through an interpreter that this is "the happiest day of my life." Like his fellow villagers, some of whom can't read or write, he has been living at subsistence levels, cutting sugar cane and doing other cultivation jobs for the more wealthy farmers in the area.

Along with 21 members of a newly formed Amigos de Tapiquilares Cooperative, he has been spending every spare day during the last year constructing the 11 houses that, through a draw, were just turned over to these families in a celebration of worship, title-signing and feasting. Cardenes can't wait to move into his new home, where, for the first time in his life, he will have indoor plumbing, running water and protection from the weather, which, in the rainy season, brings thunderstorms and drenching rains.

Based on Habitat for Humanity's model of a "hand-up, not a hand-out," these families each have an interest-free mortgage of $6,000, to be paid back to the co-op over a 15-year period. Should they default on the loan or decide to move out of the village, the property reverts back to the co-op, explains Dave Hubert, chair of the project sponsor organization, Canadian Peacemakers International (CPI), located in Edmonton, Alberta.

The one-hectare plot of land surrounding the village was purchased and donated by one of CPI's sponsors, John and Sylvia Leonard of Mancelona, Mich., successful owners of a large tire-recycling business.

Under the ceiba tree: On June 6, the Leonards and others sit under the tree with Hubert and a North American CPI supporter, Tim Neufeld, co-pastor at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, to consult with the villagers as they consider turning their land into a productive farming operation.

The village leaders are on hand to give guidance. Manuel Tabora, general manager of the housing program (Colonia Amor Y Esperanza) and CPI's local representative, provided interpretation. Jose (Chepe) Vasquez, chair of CPI Honduras (Canadiensis por la Paz Honduras), puts it into language that the villagers can understand; a local Catholic catechist, he has earned the trust of the people and they take their cues from him. The North Americans, too, have earned the Hondurans' love and affection, evidenced by the many hugs and smiles during the three-hour exchange of ideas.

Innovative computer-assisted learning: Since most of the children lack the transportation to get to school in the nearby towns, CPI has instituted a program of computer-assisted learning under the direction of Bryan Butler, formerly an educator under Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and other nongovernmental agencies. He kick-started the Honduran project in 2009 with a $60,000 fund-raising campaign to bring systematic learning to Santa Cruz, city of 50,000, as well as to the villagers where few people have progressed beyond grade 6, due to a lack of education infrastructure and opportunities.

It is all in keeping with CPI's overall vision, says Hubert, who founded CPI in 1997 following a 23-year career in post-secondary education, including eight years as a college president and 10 years with MCC. CPI's vision, he says, "is to develop and demonstrate models of peacemaking and peacebuilding that can be emulated by others to address the structural causes of conflict in Central America. The ultimate goal is to reduce the likelihood of more war in the region."

Hubert says CPI is using the best from their models and from Habitat for Humanity in developing housing, land ownership and education initiative in Honduras.—*Dick Benner, editor/publisher of* Canadian Mennonite, *for Meetinghouse*

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PANAMA CANAL ADVENTURE CRUISE (February 23 - March 5)
VISIT MEXICO and its COPPER CANYON (March 4-13)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 20 - April 2)
MEDA in MOROCCO (March 25 - April 5)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (April 27 - May 6)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 4-20)
LEGENDARY RHINE and MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE (May 11-24)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 6-18)
ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 14-23)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 23 - July 6)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (September 19-28)
A PILGRIMAGE to PORTUGAL (September 20-30)
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RESOURCES

Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History originally written by Harry Loewen and Steven M. Nolt; revised by Steven M. Nolt (Herald Press, 2010, $16.99) presents the Mennonite faith story within the sweep of church history. This engaging text uses stories of men and women, peasants and pastors, heroes and rascals, to trace the radical Reformation from 16th-century Europe to today's global Anabaptist family. Written in an accessible and nonacademic style, this revised edition updates the story and incorporates new historical research and discoveries.

Toward a Biblical Theology of Marriage: A Study of the Bible's Vocabulary of Marriage by Ernest D. Martin (Wipf & Stock, 2010, $20) reflects a pastor's conviction that biblical revelation culminating in Christ speaks to the issues and potentials for marriage in a confused world. Martin develops a Christological paradigm for marriage that is consistent and applicable.

Multifaith Musings: Essays and Exchanges by Dorothy Yoder Nyce (Evangel Author Services, 2010, $10) endorses openness to truth in diverse faiths while being loyal to one chosen one. Essays, imagined dialogues and a play present content with themes such as water, crossing cultures, biblical and Hindu scriptures, and the paradox of world religions: conflict and peacebuilding. The foreword is by Paul F. Knitter. It is available from evangelauthorservices.com or dyodnyce@bnin.net.

The Nature of Grief: Photographs and Words for Reflection and Healing by Rebecca S. Hauder (Resources for Grief, 2009, $14.99) uses photos of nature and texts to offer 12 suggestions for healing one's grief. The ideas are gleaned from 25 years of counseling the bereaved and from professional peers. It is available at www.resourcesforgrief.com.

The Voice of a Writer: Honoring the Life of Katie Funk Wiebe, edited by Doug Heidebrecht and Valerie G. Rempel (Kindred Productions, 2010, $21.95), includes 13 essays on Wiebe, a well-known Mennonite Brethren writer, as well as samples from her writings. The collection reflects on the significance of Wiebe's writing and her contribution to the life of the church.

Leaders Who Shaped Us: Canadian Mennonite Brethren: 1910-2010, edited by Harold Jantz (Kindred Productions, 2010, $29.95), collects the stories of 25 people who played a role in creating the community of believers known as Mennonite Brethren in Canada. During the tumultuous years from 1910-2010, they led, sometimes cajoled, often inspired, at times sharply reproved the church they were an intimate part of and loved.

MCC sends letter about Gaza blockade

Ask for an impartial and independent investigation into May 31 clash

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is urging the governments of the United States and Canada to work constructively within the international community to restore the normal flow of goods and people through Gaza-Israel border crossings.

In letters to the U.S. president and Canada's foreign affairs minister, MCC urges them to support an impartial and independent investigation into Israel's deadly response to the Free Gaza flotilla on May 31.

The convoy, carrying 10,000 tons of much-needed aid, was attempting to enter the Gaza Strip by sea and break the Israeli blockade that has a devastating effect on the livelihoods and lives of Gaza's 1.5 million Palestinians. The convoy was intercepted by the Israeli military before reaching Gaza, and clashes led to the deaths of nine people.

Daryl Byler, MCC's representative in the region, said hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza live in dire conditions without employment and basic supplies because of the Israeli blockade.

Israel has long restricted the entry of goods into Gaza but tightened its blockade in June 2007, when Hamas became the ruling power after winning elections in 2006.

The severe restrictions that prevent the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza is seen by many as "collective punishment" for electing Hamas, says Byler, who lives in Amman, Jordan.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 10 percent of Gazan children suffer from chronic malnutrition, and two-thirds of the Gazan population faces hunger on a daily basis.

Before Hamas came to power in June 2007, about 850 truckloads of food, fuel and other essential supplies were transported into Gaza every day. That number has now been reduced to 128 loads.

"They are getting only 15 percent of the goods they got three years ago," says Byler, explaining the restrictions have created an alternative system of smuggling goods from Egypt through a network of underground tunnels.

"These goods are sold at inflated prices that most people cannot afford," he explains. "It would be much better to have an above-ground system."

Gaza's agriculture and fishing industries have been decimated by restrictions on imports of livestock, seeds and seedlings, plastic piping, iron bars for animal shelters, water pumps, filters and irrigation pipes, fishing nets, engine spare parts, veterinary drugs and cement.

Buildings and infrastructure destroyed during the late 2008-2009 war cannot be repaired because the blockade restricts imports of building materials.

MCC has worked in Palestine and Israel for more than 60 years. In partnership with local Palestinian and Israeli organizations, MCC supports families through its Global Family education sponsorships, distributes material resources such as blankets and school kits, and oversees an income generation project that helps families raise rabbits and chickens for consumption and sale.—*Ed Nyce of Mennonite Central Committee*

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CALENDAR

Shirk, Sherk, Sherick etc., **biennial reunion of the Schürch Family Association of North America** will be held Aug. 6-7 at EMU, Harrisonburg, Va. For more information contact Verne Schirch at vrnschurch856@gmail.com, phone 540-433-0885 or check www.schurch.ca or www.schurchfamilyassociation.net.

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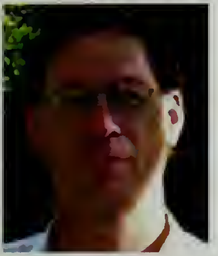


Horst, Kurt, was installed on May 2 as lead pastor of Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Hostetter, G. Hershey, ended a term as chaplain at Welsh Mountain Home, East Earl, Pa., via Meadville Mennonite Church, on April 1.

Shenk, Roger, was licensed toward ordination April 25 as pastor at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.

Swarey, Allen, was ordained as associate pastor at Stuarts Draft Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft, Va., on May 16.

Swartzendruber, Steve, was ordained at Northern Virginia Mennonite Church, Fairfax, Va., on May 16, for his hospice chaplaincy ministry with VITAS Hospice of Northern Va.

Yoder, Martha Becker, was ordained as associate pastor a West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa, on May 30.

Zimmerman, Micah, was ordained as lead pastor at Meadville Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on May 2.

OBITUARIES

Alderfer, Mary Ellen C. Shisler, 93, Sarasota, Fla., died May 23 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Earle L. Alderfer (deceased). Parents: Horace and Maggie Clemmer Shisler. Children: John, Herbert, Joe, Linda Ruiz; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, and May 29 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Arndt, Arlene, 80, Hartville, Ohio, died April 10. Funeral: April 15 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

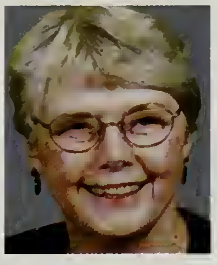
Bauer, Davis, 85, Connell, Wash., died April 4 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Rose Bauer. Parents: William F. and Marie Schafer Bauer. Children: Ed, Janet Bauer-McVay, Fred, Larry; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wash.

Beck, Charles E., 78, Archbold, Ohio, died April 20. Spouse: Arva Short Beck. Parents: Harley and Frances Klopfenstein Beck. Children: Mark, Luana King, Linda Dickerson, Dave; 14 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Lockport Mennonite, Stryker, Ohio.

Beebe, Mary J. Stucky, 65, Moundridge, Kan., died June 1. Spouse: Edgar R. Beebe. Parents: Milford P. and Martha J. Krehbiel Stucky. Child: Shane. Funeral: June 4 at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Berkey, Austin L., 77, Goshen, Ind., died April 18. Parents: Cletus and Clara Miller Berkey. Funeral: April 23 at Greencroft Meeting House, Goshen, Ind.

Braun, Bernie N., 83, Altona, Manitoba, died April 28. Spouse: Tina Wieler Braun. Parents: Bernhard A. and Agatha Neufeld Braun. Children: Mel, Daryl, Connie, Carilee Dueck, Dwight, Tammy; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: May 2 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.



Brenneman, Kathryn L. "Katie," 78 died March 31 at Samaritan Albany General Hospital, Albany, Ore., of pulmonary fibrosis. Katie was born in Indiantown, Bureau County, Ill., on October 25, 1931, to Wilbur J. and Marybelle (Stutzman) Smucker. She was raised on a farm outside of Tiskilwa, Ill., graduating from Tiskilwa High School in 1949. She left home to attend Goshen College, graduating in 1954 with a bachelor of science in nursing. She met Gerald "Jerry" Brenneman from Albany, Ore., at college, and they were married Sept. 2, 1954, at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Katie's home church. They moved to Albany in 1957, establishing their permanent home there when Jerry was hired as a high school teacher. Katie worked for a time at Albany General Hospital before becoming a nurse for a local doctor for over 20 years, retiring in 1989. Katie served as Sunday school and Bible school teacher at Albany Mennonite Church and recently as usher and welcoming greeter. She also volunteered at the Mennonite Village, where they lived, as a buyer and coordinator of help for the two gift stores. Katie and Jerry enjoyed traveling, visiting family and grandchildren, and Europe four times including a

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

50th anniversary trip to Ireland. Survivors include her husband, Jerry; sister Annalee Yordy; daughter Ann Stroud, sons Douglas, and Daniel; and granddaughters Leslie Stroud Romero, Dr. Sara Franzen and Maggie Brenneman. A memorial service for Katie was held April 5 at the Albany Mennonite Church in Albany.

Brilhart, Earle Rodney, 98, Goshen, Ind., and Scottdale, Pa., died April 19. Spouse: Marnetta Yake Brilhart. Parents: C.A. and Cora Loucks Brilhart. Children: Theodore, Kathleen Brilhart Repko, Daniel. Funeral: April 25 at Meeting House at Greencroft, Goshen.

Bucher, Dr. Samuel J., 91, Thomas, W.V., died May 21. Spouse: Kathryn Hostetter Bucher. Spouse: Margaret M. Mininger Bucher (deceased). Parents: Bela L. and Mabel Musselman Bucher. Children: S. Jonanthan, J. Daniel, Sarah Ellen Myers, Mary Beth Lind; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 25 at Dry Fork Assembly of God Church.

Derstine, Noah T., 96, Perkasie, Pa., died May 13 of arteriosclerotic heart disease. Parents: Ruth Freed Derstine. Parents: Samuel and Lizzie Trauger Derstine. Children: Jeanette Baum, Bette Aukerman, Carolyn Godshall; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 17 at the Chapel of the Rockhill Mennonite Community, Sellersville, Pa.

Ebeling, Justina Anna Dick, 89, Saint James, Minn., died May 16. Spouse: Mayo J. Ebeling (deceased). Parents: Abram B. and Susan "Susanna" Heppner Dick. Children: Susan Anderson, Paul Ebeling; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 in Mountain Lake, Minn.

Emerson, R.D., 92, Fisher, Ill., died April 24 of congestive heart disease. Spouse: Mildred Genevieve Heiser Emerson (deceased). Parents: Enoch and Ruth Ellen Wilkerson Emerson. Children: Ruth Horsch, Mary Lou Kelley, Anna Kay Friesen, Phyllis Mishler; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 1 at Fairhaven A.M. Church, Goshen, Ind.

Gehman, Harold M., 89, Lancaster, Pa., died May 8. Spouse: Gladys M. Lehman Gehman. Parents: Barton and Anna Martin Gehman. Children: David E., Edward D., Rachel Dawn Gehman; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa.

Gingerich, Phyllis Marie Eash, 80, Kalona, Iowa, died June 9. Spouse: Leo Glenn Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Glen and Lavanda Fisher Eash. Children: Nancy Gingerich, Charles, Angela Eash; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Wellman Mennonite Church, Wellman, Iowa.

Gyer, Helen Haaby, 86, Schwenksville, Pa., died April 27 of cerebrovascular disease. Spouse: Christian Gyger. Parents: Daniel and Marie Roche Haaby. Children: Claire Kratz, John Peter; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at Williams Bergey Koffel Funeral Home, Telford, Pa.

Halteman, Wilmer Moyer, 93, Sellersville, Pa., died April 28. Spouse: Sara Pearl Guntz Halteman (deceased). Parents: Elmer and Mary Moyer Halteman. Children: Lareta Halteman Finger, James, Mary Ann Conrad, Elizabeth Joan Dintaman, Jennifer Lynn Schrock; 11 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Harnish, John Houser, 91, Millersville, Pa., died April 14 of complications from pneumonia. Spouse: Ruth Warfel Harnish. Parents: Jacob T. and Ella W. Harnish. Children: Esther Breneman, John Henry, Elizabeth Siegrist, Mary Grinder, James, Ruth Yoder, David; 27 grandchildren; 48 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at Millersville Mennonite Church.

Helmuth, Elnora M. Bender, 87, Sarasota, Fla., died May 6. Spouse: Freeman Helmuth. Parents: Milton and Magdalena Roth Bender. Children: Terry, Dean, Laurie Zook; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 10 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

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Helmuth, Mary S. Schrock, 77, Hartville, Ohio, died May 2. Spouse: Ervin Helmuth. Parents: Henry H. and Mary Ann Miller Schrock. Children: Norma Anderson, Steven, Rosemary Wolf, Thomas Eugene; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Hickey, Claire E. Tammany, 75, Lancaster, Pa., died May 26 of cancer. Spouse: John E. Hickey, Sr. Parents: Harry S. and Martha Faltine Tammany. Children: Claire "Sue" McMichael, Dinah Wise, John Edward, Jr., Roseanne Keller, Christopher, Michael; 11 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Kibele, Ruth E. Geiser, 91, Bluffton, Ohio, died April 23. Spouse: Kermit Kibele (deceased). Parents: John and Clara Gratz Geiser. Children: Jeannie Hinkle, Kay Wade, Kim, Jan, Don, Tom, Jack, Keith; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 1 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Klassen, Jacob, 82, Altona, Manitoba, died April 29. Spouse: Hilda Friesen Klassen. Parents: Johann and Helena Loeppky Klassen. Children: Marilyn Pappel, Shirley Borden, Jo-ann Heinrichs, Sharon Hruda, James, Karen Louise Sawatzky; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Kuhns, Olive Clemens, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., died April 22. Spouse: James Kuhns (deceased). Parents: Raymond S. and Esther S. Clemens. Children: Jean Rissler, Philip, Evelyn Rankin; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kulp, Beulah S. Gotwals, 90, Souderton, Pa., died April 4. Spouse: Howard L. Kulp (deceased). Parents: Clayton and Lillian Schueck Gotwals. Children: Ruth Coates, Lois Johnstone; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Leatherman, Richard D., 83, Dublin, Pa., died May 15. Spouse: Della M. Meyers Leatherman. Parents: John G. and Mary Derstine Leatherman. Child: Dale; three grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Lehman, Cleo Yousey, 91, Lowville, N.Y., died May 23. Spouse: Kenneth Lehman (deceased). Parents: Chris and Katie Moser Yousey. Children: Noel, Anne Lehman, Marilyn Pratt. Funeral: May 27 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.

Lehman, James E., 89, Boswell, Pa., died Feb. 22 of chronic leukemia. Parents: John J. and Bertha Lehman. Children: Betty Hostetler, James Lehman, Jr.; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Feb. 23 in Davidsville, Pa.

Lehman, Leland Charles, 90, Bluffton, Ohio, died March 12. Spouse: Dorothy Jean Burner Lehman (deceased). Parents: Alice and Leo E. Lehman. Children: Barbara Alice Boldt, Stephen, Cynthia Jean Linscheid; four grandsons; one great-grandson. Funeral: March 16 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Lehman, Lena Lela Geiser, 76, Kidron, Ohio, died March 17 of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: Clifford David Lehman. Parents: Fred F. and Lena Nussbaum Lehman. Children: Cheryl Gerber, Michael, Rod, Kent; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Martin, John Jacob, 88, Kidron, Ohio, died April 15 of acute leukemia. Spouse: Flora Jean Hostetler Martin. Parents: John Jacob and Merta Ziegler Martin. Children: Ron, Wendell, Sharon Ressler, Janis Steigauf; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 19 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Miller, Michael Peter, 23, Grantsville, Md., died April 28. Parents: Pete and Karin Naslund Miller. Sibling: Dan. Funeral: May 3 at Springs Mennonite Church, Springs, Pa.

Moyer, Elizabeth "Betty" B. Landis, 86, Telford, Pa., died May 9 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Newton F. Moyer (deceased). Parents: Abram and Ella Landis. Children: Nancy Makin, Eileen Mertz, Martha Miller; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Moyer, Kenneth S., 79, Souderton, Pa., died May 30 of pneumonia. Parents: Ellis S. and Edna Lewis Springer Moyer. Funeral: June 3 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Myer, Esther M. Hostetter, 92, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 24. Spouse: Landis E. Myer (deceased). Parents: Christian and Stella Hostetter. Children: Nancy Witmer, Earl, Nelson; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 1 at Habecker Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Neuenschwander, Naomi Sommers Helmuth, 91, Louisville, Ohio, died June 1. Spouse: Paul Neuenschwander. Spouse: Kenneth Sommers (deceased). Parents: Gideon and Fanny Helmuth. Children: Donald Sommers, Duane Sommers, Charlotte Miller, Jeanette Wagner, Sherri Lehman; step-children: Art Neuenschwander, Ken Neuenschwander, Shirley Hochstetler, Janet Hostetler, Kathy Zendt, Norma Burkholder; nine grandchildren; 14 step-grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; nine step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Nyce, Paul Moyer, 87, Souderton, Pa., died May 14 of primary degenerative dementia. Parents: Howard H. and Mary L. Moyer Nyce. Funeral: May 19 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Olson, David Cornelius, Sr., 88, Colorado Springs, Colo., died May 4. Spouse: Dorothy Pomeroy Olson (deceased). Parents: Conrad and Olga Olson. Children: Mark, David, Steve; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 10 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs.

Oyer, Viola Stauffer, 90, Gibson City, Ill., died May 11. Spouse: Vilas Oyer (deceased). Parents: Henry and Sophia Zimmerman Stauffer. Parents: Jerry S., Kenneth, Anna Marie Yoder, Helen Mae Amberg; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Reed, Lawrence "Larry" D., 51, Canton, Ohio, died March 2. Spouse: Sharon Erb Reed. Parents: Lawrence J. and Jean Reed. Children: Heather McCoy, Julie Martin; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Hartville Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Rheinheimer, Floyd A., 85, Goshen, Ind., died June 2. Spouse: Katie Mae Miller Rheinheimer (deceased). Parents: Clayton and Maude Miller Rheinheimer. Children: Dennis, Floyd, Shirley Riegsecker, Linda Young, Ron; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Ropp, Katie Leona, 95, Hesston, Kan., died June 8. Parents: Moses S. and Katherine Eimen Ropp. Funeral: June 12 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Schmidt, Luella Doris Schmidt, 82, Hesston, Kan., died May 12. Spouse: Eldon "Chick" R. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Arnold T. and Marie Flaming Schmidt. Children: Mary Jantz, Janet Freeman; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Schueck, Martha Anne Long, 56, Gilbertsville, Pa., died May 4 following a five year battle with cancer. Spouse: Arnold Schueck. Parents: James L. and Anna K. Swartz Long. Children: Michael, Amy Guldin, Katie Schueck; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 8 at Boyertown Mennonite Church, Boyertown, Pa.

Short, Doyle, 87, Archbold, Ohio, died May 14 of a heart attack. Spouse: Melva Rupp Short. Parents: Dan and Malinda Short. Children: Kent, Carla Wilhelm, Lori Carteyn; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Stockdale, Pauline S. Weaver, 82, Reedley, Calif., died May 13. Spouse: Darvin Stockdale (deceased). Children: Dorvin, John, Bobby, Gwen Peters; 10 grandchildren; many great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 17 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Stoesz, Gladys Dick, 78, Akron, Pa., died April 20. Spouse: Edgar Stoesz. Parents: Henry G. and Maria Dick. Children: Susan Stoesz Bauman, Dean, Randy, Kris Stoesz; seven grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Akron Mennonite Church.

Stutzman, Jeanette A. Burkey, 74, Milford, Neb., died May 3 of cancer. Spouse: Robert G. Stutzman. Parents: Lester and Stella Zimmerman Burkey. Children: Charnell Sanders, Robert K.; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Stutzman, Martha M. Kauffman, 91, Kalona, Iowa, died June 12. Spouse: John Stutzman. Children: Claretta McArtor, Merle, John, Harold, Laverta Steiner, Laverna Troyer; 16 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 16 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Thomas, Maxine Virginia Aeschliman, 79, Archbold, Ohio, died May 11. Spouse: Sanford Thomas. Parents: Ben and Mary Conrad Aeschliman. Children: Bonnie Heatwole, Becky Short, Audrey Burkholder; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Troyer, Ferne Mary Fisher, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died May 18. Spouse: Cleo Troyer (deceased). Children: Richard, Ronald, Randy, Beverly Strother; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Weber, Edna Martin, 87, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died April 27. Spouse: Ivan Weber (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Sarah Sitler Martin. Children: Karen Hallman, Janet Weber; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 30 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Wenger, Samuel Esbenshade, 72, Akron, Pa., died May 15 of a heart attack and automobile accident. Spouse: Ruth Arlene Derstine Wenger. Parents: Samuel Stoner and Ella Mae Esbenshade Wenger. Children: Ann Whipple, Jonathan Whipple, Carla Vicidomini, Tonya; four grandchildren. Memorial service to be held at Akron Mennonite Church at a future date.

Wyse, Glenn Daniel, 76, Wauseon, Ohio, died May 22. Parents: Ira and Mable Mull Wyse. Funeral: May 27 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Yoder, Wilmer H., 95, Pueblo, Colo., died May 21. Spouse: Marjorie Arnett Yoder (deceased). Spouse: Grace Rhodes Yoder (deceased). Parents: Elba J. and Erma Miller Yoder. Children: Roger Yoder, Sharon Trauger; step-children: Linda Rhodes, Dennis Rhodes, Pamela Rowley; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at Pueblo Mennonite Church, Glenwood Springs, Colo.

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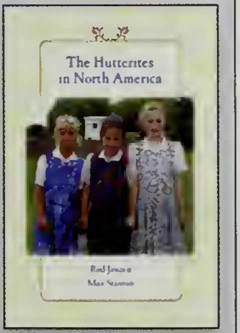

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Answers to the page 61 puzzle

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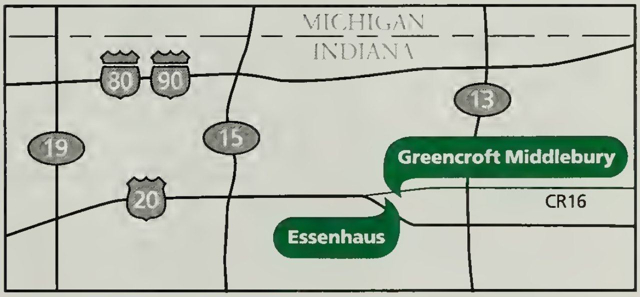

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Muddy boots welcome

Sharon Kniss attends Early Church, a Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg, Va.

Rather than rushing from one enclosed space to another, I am appreciating nature and greeting my fellow humans along the way.

My favorite memory came on the second day, when I saw a friendly pub sign: "Muddy boots welcome." It also welcomed pets (no cows, sheep or pigs), but I was particularly pleased with its welcome for my sweaty self and my muddy boots. I had chosen to walk across England for my holiday in 2007, at one of its narrower west-east stretches of 200 miles. Among other reasons, I hoped this walk would give me opportunities to ponder important matters of life and viewed the journey as a spiritual pilgrimage, listening for and seeking God along the way.

However, I discovered that instead of mind-blowing considerations of God and the universe, I was predominantly concerned about jumping over the waterfalls, not slipping on the descent, surviving the ascent, whether I would have tinned beans for dinner, how I was going to pitch my tent in pouring rain or whether I would ever be dry again. I was concerned about my bruising and blistering feet, my aching legs and back, and what the next day's terrain would entail. My focus turned to my physical needs—water, food and shelter. I became aware of my humanity while I walked. I was awakened not only to my physical needs but also my physical mortality (perhaps it was exaggerated in the moment, but I was aware of my mortality when I encountered high winds, a storm assault, an apparently insurmountable gorge, becoming lost in the middle of nowhere, getting stuck in a bog). I also awoke to the interconnected nature of the world and to my dependency on God for my inner strength.

That's as deep as my discoveries went—that I was human. And yet, I wonder, what more is there to know? It's easy to forget we're human. For example, take our approach to accepting new technology. Some people may like to call me a Luddite and thus disregard my ideas in this area. But I suggest I'm merely a hesitant technology consumer. Similar to some Amish communities, I want to see more of our communities gather together and discern the level of appropriateness for the newest technology. It has become too easy to blur the lines between necessity and convenience; we forget that convenience is not necessity.

If we take time to consider whether or not the newest technology is essential to our daily use, we possess a greater chance of remaining human—retaining our power to be active participants in life rather than passive recipients of what society tells us we need. For example, I have determined that it is not necessary to own a car in Harrisonburg, Va., where I live. Having a car is a great convenience, but in truth it is not necessary. Harrisonburg (a city of 45,000 people nestled in the rural Shenandoah Valley) is a car-friendly city and generally unfavorable to alternative modes of transport. But with careful planning and a willingness from friends to share resources when necessary, living without a car becomes remarkably doable. I have felt more human by transporting myself on my two feet and on my dependable bicycle. Rather than rushing from one enclosed space to another, I am appreciating nature and greeting my fellow humans along the way.

When I was walking in England, I stopped in at an art gallery in Richmond (North Yorkshire) that was showcasing Mackenzie Thorpe's sculptures. One that particularly struck me was entitled "My Crucifixion" (see photo). The sculpture is a tall block tower whose top appears hinged and leans at an angle to the tower. A small man is trying to carry the weight of the top block as it bears down on him. It is a dramatic scene. To the observer it appears the small man is seconds away from being crushed. His hands are outstretched in a way recollecting Jesus on the cross.

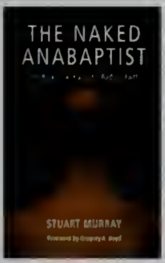
The sculpture spoke to me about the crushing power of our nonhuman industries. These will be our crucifixion if we don't take the opportunities before us to reclaim our humanity. I encourage you to join me in finding the places that welcome muddy boots as we strive to be fully human, as Jesus was fully human. TM

FILM REVIEW

Babies (G), an unnarrated 80-minute documentary, follows the first year of four babies from four countries: the United States, Japan, Mongolia and Namibia. The film compares infant development around the world without critiquing parenting methods. The most poignant comparison is between the baby in the Himba tribal lands in Namibia, who never comes into contact with any modern technology, and the babies in Tokyo and San Francisco, who are surrounded by human-made technologies.—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith by Stuart Murray (Herald Press, 2010, $13.99) is a good distillation of the basics of what is called Anabaptist faith. Despite the catchy title, which implies a simple definition of Anabaptism, Murray acknowledges the complexities and weaknesses of what is a label for a 16th-century movement and that "the cultural context is significantly different today." While the book comes out of a British milieu, it is certainly relevant to American Mennonites, who "seem more interested in purpose-driven churches or the Alpha course." The core convictions he describes are worth discussing and then seeking to practice in our congregations.—*gh*



The Least of These: Poems by Todd Davis (Michigan State University Press, 2009, $19.95) express a detailed awe for every living thing and draws on stories from Christian and other traditions. Davis, a Mennonite poet, often connects nature with a spiritual vision: "There is no pain in the dark, and when the water / surfaces, it flows by a hayfield filled with timothy / and clover. Despite the sun that shines upon its back, / there's no more or less happiness, no more or less suffering."—*gh*

Island of lost souls

Let's say someone describes a show on network TV to you that involves a set of characters who are not only physically lost from their usual surroundings but spiritually lost and lonely. Eventually these characters find meaning and communion after death as they prepare to enter a peaceful form of afterlife. You might think Evangelicals had found a way to get their views to millions of viewers.

You'd be wrong. The show I've described is *Lost*, which aired its final, 2½-hour episode on May 23, ending six seasons as one of the more popular shows on TV.

I wrote about the show in this column almost five years ago, following its first season. I wrote that "beneath the surface of viewers' consciousness rests questions we all wonder about: the place of faith and reason, how we can get along, what is real."

At the heart of the show is the journey of a group of characters, all of whom are isolated and experience their alienation in a variety of interesting ways. They find themselves on an island—a mysterious island, to reference Jules Verne—and face the proposition that they must learn "to live together or die alone."

The show was at its best as it explored these characters' lives—both before the plane crash that left them on the island and during their time there—and their relationships with one another.

The show also introduced many strange events and supernatural elements, such as a smoke monster. This year's final season explained the origins of that, presenting a mythical tale that tied several strands together.

Many viewers found the increasingly bizarre aspects to the show—including time travel and people coming back from the dead—enticing, while many others found them offputting and stopped watching the show altogether.

Still, millions tuned in to the finale, and the response was mixed. Many found the ending emotionally satisfying, while many others were disappointed at how few answers were provided to the many questions the show raised.

In an interview published May 13 in the *New York Times*, Carlton Cuse and David Lindelof, who oversaw the show's story, said they were leaving "a lot of intentional ambiguity." They also said that the most important theme of the show is redemption.

Of course, they see that as internal and not necessarily Christian or any other kind of religious redemption, though it could include that.

Lost is a good example of a postmodern sensibility. It delighted in referencing many varied sources, from Star Wars to Narnia to Tolkien to John Steinbeck to the Bible. It named characters after well-known philosophers—Locke and Hume—and included religious references. In the show's final scene, set in a church where many of the show's characters have gathered after death, one room includes symbols of various religions.

The show raised many questions but refused to provide clear answers. The deliberate ambiguity frustrated many viewers, especially the more modernist ones who want things to make sense.

One of the main goals of *Lost* was to entertain, to keep viewers watching, and that it did. It used high-quality production techniques, and the acting was generally excellent. All these elements made it a show many wanted to watch.

Why even care about a TV show? First, it can move us to think about ultimate issues, such as learning to live together or die alone. Second, many in our culture are drawn to such shows. These can help us enter conversations about what brings meaning to our lives.

MAY 2010 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ANIMALS

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Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.
John & Velma Zook, Orrville, Ohio

The book of Daniel

By Jeanette Baer Showalter

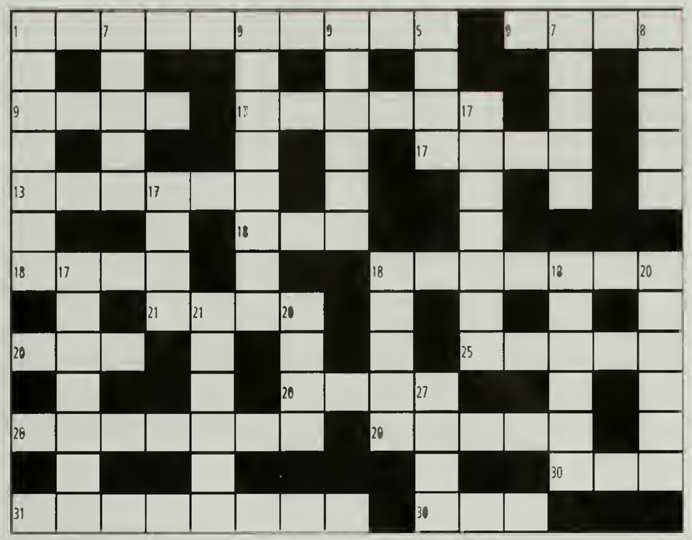
All references are to the New International Version.

ACROSS

1. This last Babylonian king was killed and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom.
6. Daniel had a vision of a ram and a goat by the Ulai Canal in this province (Dan. 8).
9. This sealed ____ of truth is referred to in Daniel 10.
10. After sealing Daniel in the den, the king "spent the night without ____ ... and he could not sleep." (Dan. 6)
12. The man in Daniel's vision said to him, "Since the first day that you set your mind to ___ understanding and to humble yourself before your God." (Dan. 10:12).
13. Daniel prays, "O Lord, ___ ! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act!" (Dan. 9)
15. In the same prayer, Daniel asks: "Give ___, O God, and hear, open your eyes and see ..."
16. Daniel was given a new ___ by the chief official (Dan. 1).
18. The king wanted Daniel to interpret the mysterious "____ on the Wall."
21. During a last battle, "Many countries will fall, but ___, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand." (Dan. 11:41).
24. Daniel had a vision in which a goat defeated and trampled this animal (Dan 8).
25. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he was the tree that grew ____ and strong, and he was told to cut it down. (Dan. 4:11).
26. "O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous ___ , turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem ... " (Dan. 9:16).
28. Meshach's original name.
29. The boastful Nebuchadnezzar was made to eat grass like cattle and grew hair like the feathers of an ____ ..." (Dan. 4).
30. The king of the South and the king of the North, "with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and __ to each other ..." (Dan. 11:27)
31. "King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a ____ of his nobles." (Dan. 5).
32. Daniel is told: "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the ___ of the 1,335 days." (Dan 12).

DOWN

1. Nebuchadnezzar was king of _______ .
2. Daniel was thrown into their den for not obeying the law.
3. Azariah's new name.
4. "As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, ____ , lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music ..." (Dan. 3).
5. The stone at the mouth of the den was sealed with the king's own signet ____. " (Dan 6).
7. Daniel had a vision "as he was ____ on his bed" of four great beasts. (Dan. 7).
8. Darius was from this region. (Dan. 8:20; 9:1)
11. This angel appeared to Daniel. (Dan. 8).
14. Nebuchadnezzar was told to leave the stump of the ___ with its roots.
17. Hananiah, Mishael, and ______ .
18. Daniel saw a vision of the Ancient of Days with this color clothing and hair.
19. Daniel prays, "All _____ has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you." (Dan 9).
20. "The shaggy goat is the king of ____ ." (Dan 8).
22. Daniel interprets these.
23. Daniel and his friends refuse to defile themselves by eating a ___ of food from the king's table.
27. "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to ____ us from it ... " (Dan 3).



RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our September 2010 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

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August 1, 2010

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(Continued from page 5)

with happy, fruitful people who were Christian and gay, and with their families, marked a turning point for us. While personal stories in earlier years were heavy on hostility and rejection from other family members and churches, this year's sharing showed an increase in themes of resolution and acceptance.—*Ray Elvin Horst, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Kudos for *The Mennonite*

The last week of April I read the April issue. I was excited and amazed. This is our church paper. It's among the best. I went back and read January, February and March. As I finished, the May issue came.

I took a block of time to study the design and format, noting the department and contents sections. By looking at and reading the five issues several things stood out to me.

First, overall design. The cover is "us," most appropriately chosen photos. Not stock. The three photos on page three are strong lead-ins. The contents and departments are a clear guide. Your news and news analysis are far-ranging, relevant and carefully done. Your editorials deal with timely topics, invite reflection, direct readers to a biblical perspective. You are able to look at controversial issues without letting yourself become part of the controversy.

The Mennonite is timely, helps us reflect on our faith, how to live our faith and helps us think through contemporary issues. The magazine has a reverent spirit, is biblically rooted and fits who we are as a church, but it helps us see ourselves in the larger world in a wide lens. My thanks for a high-quality, sensitive publication.—*Laban Peachey, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Paper and ink won't go away

For assistant editor Anna Groff's emphasis on "offering content online and inviting reader feedback," I extend my high respects for this evaluation ("Comments Worth Printing," June). She is trying to reach the expanding audience readership via the formats provided by the cultural inroads of the computer in our century.

I also am so glad that Groff made the full circle to the use of the old-time paper and ink. I refer to two sentences: "Despite the buzz around social networking, our print magazine redesign also presented an invigorating update for me. I'm not alone in my enthusiasm; we also saw an increase in the number of people subscribing to *The Mennonite* over a three-month period" (as a result of our magazine redesign).

Let's not overlook the one-time prediction that television would replace the radio. After half a century, has poor little old radio been obliterated, tossed on the junk heap of an era's end? No. It's in about every one of the millions of cars and trucks on the highway. And consider the audiences of the talk-show hosts, not to mention the regular radio news and sermon listeners.

There will be library shelves 50 and 100 years from now with books removed and kept from gathering dust by librarians who've made the full circle of interest once again.—*Paul H. Martin, Akron, Pa.*

A wishfulness for peace

The year 2010 marks the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the first Mennonites in Lancaster (Pa.) County. The Mennonites practiced a wishfulness for peace. Earlier, in the 1600s, the Atlantic coastal region fringing the Delaware River was fresh frontier. This region, later called Pennsylvania, witnessed the first European settlement in 1643. The first to settle were Swedes. They were also the first Europeans to live wishful for peace.

The Swedish populace claimed only a small number who were either posted in or lived near tiny Delaware River-based forts. To their credit the Swedes not only learned to talk to the natives in their language but also adopted their place names. Because the Swedes lived almost name-featureless upon the land, today it is hard to find a Swedish name in the area of their settlement.

The great gift Swedes provided Pennsylvanians was their "wishfulness for peace." This proactive wish aided the Swedes with a blessing: an almost complete peace with their neighbors. Their tradition was carried forward by the first ambassador of the Penn family, William Penn. Penn proprietary control lasted from 1681 to 1775.

In 1693, Penn became aware of a tribal area in what is now Lancaster County. By 1700, the area was tagged the "Conestoga Country." In 1710, a small band of peace-wishing Mennonites settled into the area, the "nation's first interior frontier." These frontline residents were living, breathing peace witnesses. They were a buffer against hostilities. The tradition—a wishfulness for peace—lived onward.

Descendants of the initiating vanguard continue to live peace-witnessing lives in Lancaster County. Their anniversary is worthy of public remembrance and respect.—*Thomas R. Smith, New Cumberland, Pa.*

Need a different example

In the editorial "What is a Radical Yea Sayer?" (May), Everett Thomas made the important point that it's easier to define oneself by what one is against and miss the opportunity to be a "yea sayer." But the illustration Thomas cites is his promotion of stun guns to the Goshen, Ind., police department. The example seems marginally unorthodox for a Mennonite leader to be advocating. There are other examples that would fit the Mennonite peace and nonresistance message more appropriately. We have a directory full of organizations that are "yea sayers." Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Central Committee, to name a few, would seem to have plenty "yea sayer" examples that would provide a more congruent fit to our theology and practice.—*Larry Hauder, Boise, Idaho*

First things first A message of first importance

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.—1 Corinthians 15:3-5 (NIV)

In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul reminded the believers of first things—the basics of the Christian message. He urged them to recall the gospel message he had first delivered to them. His reminder opens a window through which we can peer into the heart of the first-century church. Paul set forth the core of the gospel message. Part of that message was that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

It takes spiritual perception to plumb the depths of Paul's teaching, especially his understanding of Christ's death on the cross. I look forward to a thorough and spiritually enervating exploration of this matter at the next biennial convention of Mennonite Church USA in Pittsburgh, scheduled for July 4-9, 2011. The theme, "Bridges to the Cross," is drawn from a passage in Paul's second letter to the Corinthian believers—2 Corinthians 5:16-20. In that passage, Paul declares that through the cross "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them." Further, he proclaims, "God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." All these echo the importance of what happened on the cross. To neglect that message is to deny the transforming and reconciling power of God in our lives. It will negate the message of the gospel that was of first importance to Paul.

If you read Mennonite periodicals, you will notice an occasional article or letter regarding the meaning of Christ's death for our sins. These writings often mirror a broader theological debate about the nature of Christ's atonement. In recent years, many have publically questioned the widely received view of Anselm and the later Reformers. Anselm understood Christ's death as a penal substitution—a spiritual transaction by which God vented on Jesus the wrath deserved by others, releasing them of their guilt. As Anabaptists, we believe that God's love invites us into a covenant relationship, resulting not only in forgiveness of sins but transformation of our daily lives. "And he has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Controversy about the nature of Christ's death on the cross is not new. Beginning on the day of Pentecost, the disciples testified that Jesus' death meant far more than met the eye of those who viewed his execution by the Romans. It was a spiritual event through which God demonstrated his ability to make right the wrongs of the world. Some of their fellow Jews responded by trying to squelch that message. Paul later reflected that the message of the cross was a "stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."

We do well to reflect on the many different ways the biblical writers reflected on the meaning of the cross. Taken together, the numerous metaphors and motifs in Scripture explain the heart of the matter. The cross of Christ reveals the wisdom, power and love of a gracious God who makes possible a new creation and a new community. Without a spiritual understanding of the crucified Messiah and his suffering love on our behalf, we will never experience the salvation that God intended for us.

It is sobering to reflect that as believers, we may downplay or ignore what Paul considered of first importance. Whatever theory we espouse of the atonement, let's take to heart Paul's reminder that Christ died not only as a martyr but also for our sins. TM

Christ died not only as a martyr but also for our sins.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Boycott Arizona?

Everett J. Thomas

A new law in Arizona that addresses undocumented immigrants is revealing a fault line within Mennonite Church USA. It also provides an opportunity for us to reason and listen together when we disagree with each other.

Because of the decision to hold the 2013 Mennonite Church USA Convention in Phoenix, strong voices are calling for the Executive Board to cancel the contract. Doing so could cost $300,000 or more, according to Executive Leadership. But if people who would normally attend a convention boycott the Phoenix location, then the convention could suffer even greater losses.

However, the money is minor compared with other significant issues among us. Some of us think the only just way to respond is to leave Phoenix, as many of our Hispanic sisters and brothers are asking. Some of us see virtue in Arizona's new law and will feel like those passionate about justice are once again ignoring a more politically conservative perspective.

Many of us who enjoy white privilege in this culture will be genuinely puzzled why undocumented residents should not be deported. Underrepresented racial/ethnic members of our church—especially Hispanics—will once again be frustrated if many white members decline to immediately stand in solidarity with the wishes of those most affected by the new law.

Mennonite Church USA should be willing to lose $300,000 rather than the people who would not or could not attend a convention in Phoenix.

As Mennonite Church USA begins the debate about whether to pull out of Phoenix, I start with the conviction that we should be willing to lose $300,000 rather than the people who would not or could not attend because it is in Arizona.

But as the calls for a boycott emerge in other denominations and grow across the country, I can already see some important counter-arguments to consider.

"The boycott will only extend our recession by three to five years and hit those who are poorest among us," said United Methodist bishop Minerva Carcano of Phoenix, the first Hispanic woman to be elected bishop in her denomination. Carcano was quoted in a May 26 Religion News Service article by Eleanor Goldberg entitled "Churches Tread Carefully on Arizona Boycott."

Goldberg also reported that a group of Episcopal bishops decided to hold their meeting in Phoenix and "use the opportunity to stand in solidarity with immigrants" there.

There is a second complication to consider. At least 12 other states are considering laws similar to Arizona's. One of those states is Pennsylvania. Depending on the outcome of the fall election, that state may have a similar immigration law on its books just as many of us head to Pittsburgh for the 2011 Mennonite Church USA Convention.

But for now, all Mennonite Church USA leaders can do is focus on Arizona and whether to pull the 2013 convention from Phoenix. According to a May 5 release, Yvonne Diaz, executive director for Iglesia Menonita Hispana, shared her disappointment in a letter to church leaders.

"I grieve the effects of this law on our Latino congregations and all Latinos in the United States," Diaz wrote. "At the same time, I also have hope that Mennonite Church USA will rise to the task of supporting immigrant brothers and sisters. Let's use our creativity to figure out how this can be a teaching moment for the whole church."

If we apply such creativity to the current question, then the counsel and wishes of those in our church who are immigrants—from any country—should weigh the heaviest as we pray, listen and reason together.—*ejt*

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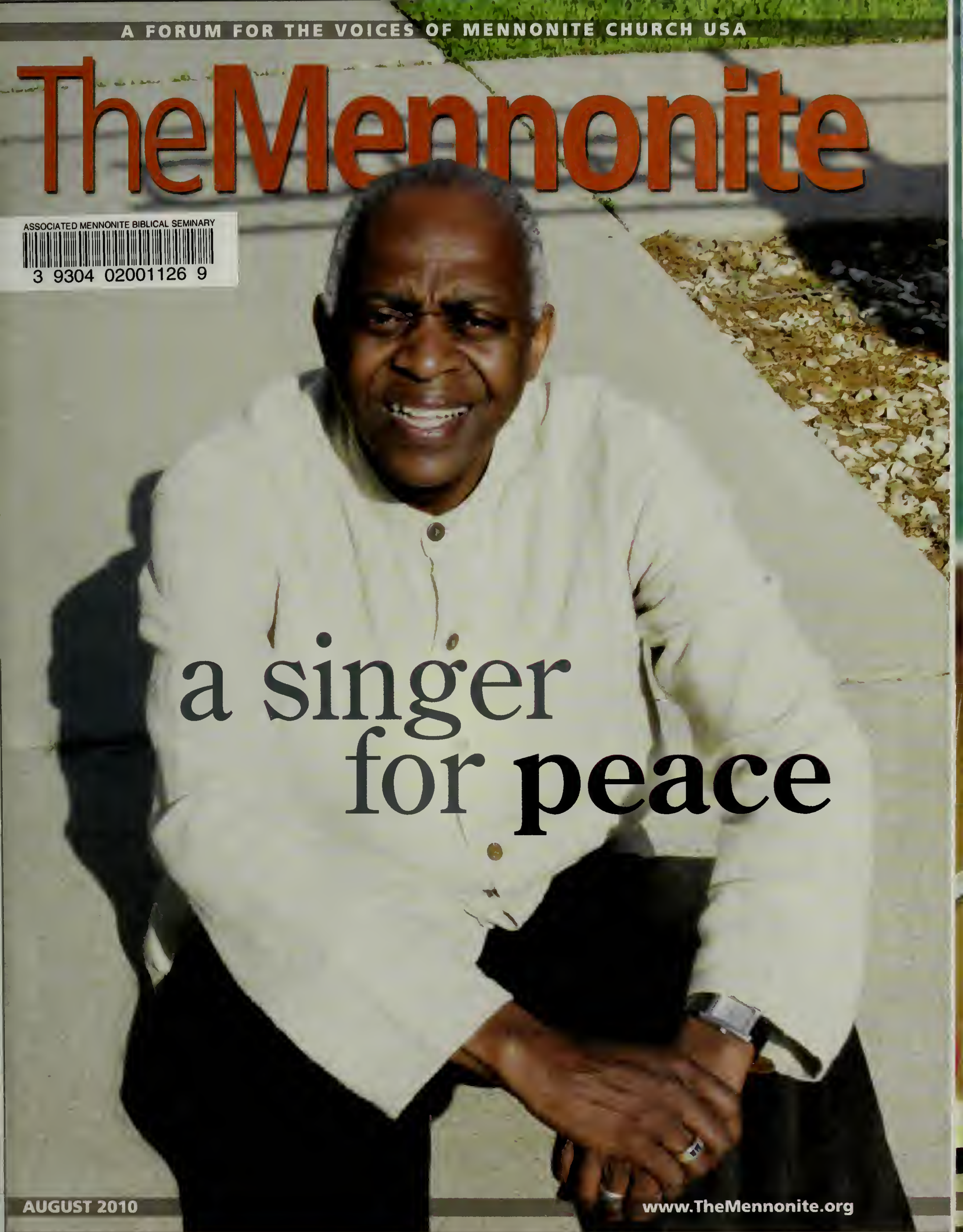

a singer for peace

AUGUST 2010

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- Coffee shop church
- The courage to lead
- The sound of time passing
- Editorial: Recalibrating

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TheMennonite August 2010 | Volume 13, Number 8

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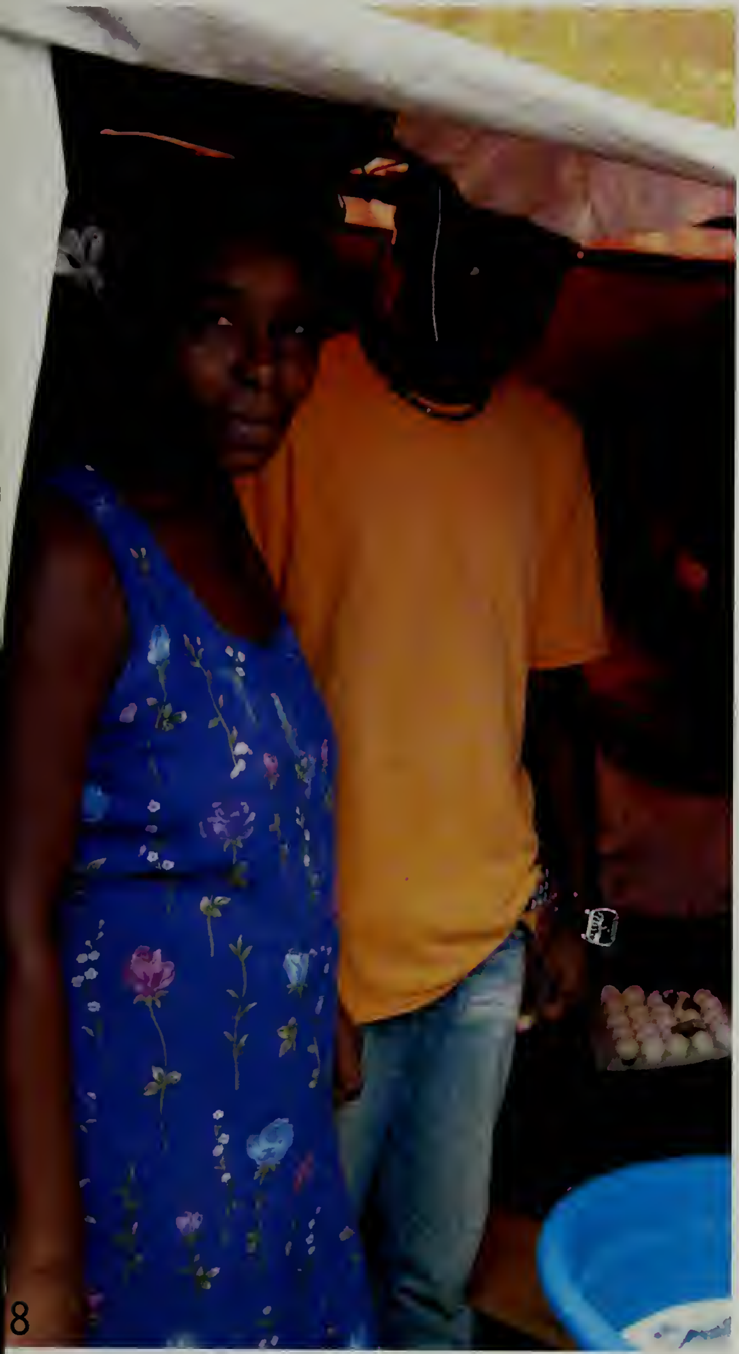

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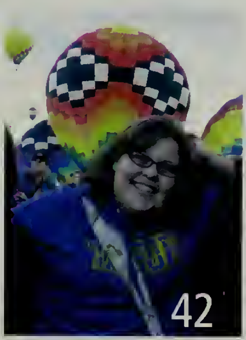

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TheMennonite
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The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

How many children?

Regarding "Announcing a New Baby" (June): The question of how many children a Christian (Mennonite) family should have comes up every few years. In a July 1995 *Gospel Herald*, an article appeared proposing that because of the world's increasing population, Christian families should limit children to two. I responded then and repeat now: Statistics can be used to make any point and are not to be entirely trusted.

Do we want to limit the salt and light in the world? Where will Mennonite institutions get enough personnel to spread the good news of the gospel to the increasing populations of the world? Or to be teachers, pastors, executives, song leaders at home? It is often the third, fourth or even eighth child (as in the case of King David) who make the greatest contribution to society.

My view is that people who want and can responsibly care for and raise large families should not be made to feel guilty. The church needs every one to help spread the good news to the increasing population of the world. And God loves every one.—*Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Elderly need lots of church

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the June section on the needs of the elderly—especially those who no longer can communicate. It's a lonely time for family members to relate to such. Family members need church and lots of it.—*Ethel Mumaw, Millersburg, Ohio*

Senior living ministries important

I am writing to express my appreciation for the June issue featuring retirement communities. As CEO at the Tel Hai Retirement Community in Honey Brook, Pa., I was very pleased to see this emphasis, since senior living ministries are an important outreach for the church. We are currently working to broaden our church connectedness. The variety of articles you included will lend greater visibility and understanding of the ways we are serving the church and our connectedness to it. —*Joe Swartz, Honey Brook, Pa.*

Meet in a border town?

In response to the concerns of our Hispanic brothers and sisters, I suggest we move the Mennonite Church USA 2013 Assembly from Phoenix to a border town—maybe El Paso/Juarez or Brownsville/Matamoros. I'm not in favor of simply canceling the convention. And I assume that wherever it is held, the main topic will be immigration. But if we simply relocate to another, typical convention site (Charlotte or Columbus or wherever), we will still be discerning at the safe distance of isolation.

What if we booked half the rooms on the Mexican side of the border? What if we held panels with Border Patrol agents, undocumented workers, politicians and business owners, immigration reform activists, local church leaders and others who live with the realities constantly? Maybe that is a more authentic way for us to follow in the wake of Jesus, who has "broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2).—*Rod Stafford, Portland*

Appreciates articles

I am very late, but I wanted to say how much I have appreciated some of the articles in the last few issues. I have found the following particularly helpful: The monthly column by Ervin Stutzman; "Learning to Fly" by Mayeken Kehr gave me the assurance that the next generation will carry on the faith (April); "I Believe in the Holy Spirit" by Isaac Villegas gave a new understanding of Pentecost (May); "From Confusion to Comprehension" by S. Roy Kaufman, was another look at the meaning of Pentecost, particularly as related to rural living (May).

Thanks for giving us these articles, and thanks to those who wrote them. —*Elvina Martens, Goshen, Ind.*

Bethel College selection

In the recent press release from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., announcing the appointment of Perry White as the new president (see page 39), I was surprised by the lack of information concerning White's Christian involvement and commitment. The press release mentioned that Dr. White was baptized as an adult, that he had been involved with Presbyterian and Catholic colleges, and that he has a strong ability in the area of development and fund-raising. While his abilities in development and creating four choirs are laudable and highly praised by the Bethel board of directors, one area that is not mentioned is his faith commitment. All that is mentioned is his adult believer's baptism. I am happy to know that, but I care more about his faith commitment and church activities than his community-based activities.

I am concerned about the direction Bethel College may end up going when the press release spends more time on White's fund-raising and development abilities than it does on his faith commitments.

In my years in Mennonite churches, I have supported Bethel College. I've wanted my children to attend Bethel, but that has not happened. I truly pray that Bethel's board of directors made the best decision for the school.—*Karla Morton, Meridian, Idaho*

Editor's note: *When a reader criticizes a Mennonite Church USA institution or leader, we reserve the right to have that institution or leader respond to the letter in the same issue. We invited Melvin Goering, chair of the Bethel College board, to respond. He declined.*

Burkholder was a gift to the church

Our brother J. Lawrence Burkholder was a special gift of God to the church (see page 38). He lived what he taught— that we have one vocation, to be disciples of Christ—and this vocation guides us in selectivity with our choice of occupation. I well remember this emphasis from his class at seminary, a correction of the common general misuse of the word vocation, as though it means occupation or profession. His emphasis on discipleship was in the same vein as that of Bonhoeffer.

As a colleague in educational administration, I found his perspective most stimulating, never satisfied with just passing on knowledge, but calling us to wrestle with the relation of particular insights in the arts, humanities and sciences to the whole. As a theologian he kept our focus on the large meanings of the lordship of Christ and of the kingdom of God for society. He extended the implications of this rule of God into the sociopolitical areas more than most of us, calling leaders of state to ethics of justice and equity.

Thanks be to God that the Spirit gifts the church with such people in its different periods of history.—*Myron S. Augsburger, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Need more transparency

As I read Alan Stucky's "A Modest Proposal for our Colleges" (June), I wasn't quite sure what the real message was. He suggests that "everyone in Mennonite Church USA" should agree that all our colleges "are genuinely attempting to be faithful Christian institutions." Furthermore, we should be "actively working to dispel all stereotypes and rumors."

The idea that seems to underlie his whole article is that those people who are critical of our colleges—or who wonder about how genuinely Christian they are—are operating on the basis of "stereotypes and rumors," and that if we just spoke accurately and truthfully, the whole situation would clear up. It seems like the real message he is sending is, "Our colleges are doing a great

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

When associate editor Anna Groff worked with Hesston (Kan.) College professor and ambassador Tony Brown to tell his story (page 12), we also wanted to include some of the racial prejudice experiences in his life. But true to form for a peacemaker, he refused to let those experiences shape his identity.

"My life is so much more than any negative racial experiences I might have encountered, and this is where we can focus," Brown says in the sidebar on page 15.

The question of racial prejudice is at the heart of an Opinion piece on page 36 and a news story on page 37. In Opinion, Felipe Hinojosa and Hugo Saucedo explain why "Mennonite Church USA Must Officially Boycott Arizona." The news story describes a delegation of Mennonite Church USA leaders who will head to Phoenix Aug. 12-13 to gather information to help with the decision about holding the 2013 convention in that state.

For those unhappy that we now publish the answers to the crossword puzzle in this same isse, please see the note on page 60.—*Editor*

Fruit of the vine

Isaac Villegas is pastor of the Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener." —John 15:1 (TEV)

A few years ago I started a vegetable garden in our front yard. I was thrilled to see the fruit growing from the long vines—grape tomato vines entangled with large slicing tomatoes, growing into one another, all mixed up and bound together as they reached out their leaves and branches to the sun, reds and yellows, beautiful and delicious.

We couldn't eat the fruit of the vines fast enough. Even after sharing with our neighbors, we still had tomatoes that rotted on the vines, which I ended up dumping into our compost pile.

The following spring I found tomato plants growing everywhere. The rich compost must have redistributed the seeds throughout the yard. I had more tomato plants than I could handle, growing in places that I found inconvenient—such as among my herbs and sweet corn.

The future of any garden lies with the seeds and the soil. When the fruit dies, the seeds are set free to produce new life. The secret to new life is in the compost, with the decomposing fruit, where the seeds of life abide. Compost shows us how fruit dies its way into the future.

Everett J. Thomas

Isaac Villegas was one of three people who provided meditations at the installation of Ervin Stutzman as Mennonite Church USA executive director on March 7. This column is adapted from that sermon. Behind Villegas (left to right) are Myron Augsburger of Harrisonburg, Va., and Patricia Shelly of Newton, Kan.

Jesus, the fruit of Mary's womb, dies his way into the future. With Christ, resurrected life is our future as well, a life that we die into. Not protected life. Not carefully planned life. Not predictable life. Not life as we know it. Not life as we want it. But resurrected life. Unexpected and surprising life. Miraculous life. A life that gives up all our plans, all our power plays and waits with Jesus on the cross, in weakness—a life that waits for resurrection. That's our future.

The church is a fruit that dies its way into the future. We don't know what this future looks like. We can't plan for it. We can't make it happen on our own terms, on our schedule, within our designated spaces.

Resurrection scandalizes our best plans for the church and offers us something more wonderful than we could ask for or imagine.

To see this fruit that dies into resurrection, we have to spend time in the compost—the manure, the waste pile, the places where we've thrown rotten fruit, unwanted gifts.

Our church needs people who become familiar with the manure, who dig into our smelly and mucky compost—the storehouse of gifts from the past, and discarded fruit in the present, the unwanted and forgotten and dismissed.

This is where we can begin to see the seeds of resurrection. We have to open our eyes to the beauty of God's work in the places we'd rather not step with our clean, white shoes, without spot or wrinkle.

Left to ourselves, we'd rather not get our hands dirty. We'd rather live without our compost—make it go way, export it to far off places, out of sight, out of mind. But if we do that, we lose the rich soil that can grow us into resurrected life.

Our future is not an escape from the past or from the dead weight of rotten fruit. Instead, resurrection comes to those who wait in the darkness of the tomb, where there is no way out, and open themselves to the stirring of the Holy Spirit.

To await the resurrection means we learn to live by miracles, like a tomato plant growing where we did not imagine it possible. We live with and through our compost, our manure, the fruit from the Father's garden that we've thrown away.

Through the Holy Spirit, we die our way into the future, which is the life of resurrected fruit. TM

Being still

by Paul Maurice Martin

Round earth
Round sky
Bird's eye
Catches in its compass all; all stones, trees
That gyrate, twirling in a head-spin.
He senses feathers, parted by the wind,
Straining taut and upcurled on a silken skin;
Precisely feels, with swift release of body heat,
A delicate, staccato chill from wing to wing.
Knowing what he knows,
But all unknowing that he knows,
He is what is.
Above, the sun, below
The leaf-whirl, rock-spin, traffic din.
He moves with what is moving.

And I, a man,
Caught up in the self-same go-round,
Am silenced, stilled and filled with praise
For being on this hill to see a bird fly.
One leg, an arm and half my face break sky
Half emerging
From the swirling colors of domed nature's dream.

Paul Maurice Martin lives in Ridley Park, Pa., and is author of Original Faith: What Your Life Is Trying to Tell You. *For more information visit www.originalfaith.com.*

Accident claims EMU grad

HARRISONBURG, Va.— A 2010 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, lost his life July 1 in a motorcycle accident near Bridgewater, Va. Jason Jay Marner, 22, from Brighton, Iowa, was riding his motorcycle between work sites with his employer, Dynamic Aviation, when he apparently lost control and strayed into the path of an oncoming vehicle.

Marner was the son of Stan and Joann Marner of Brighton, Iowa. He transferred from Hesston (Kan.) College the fall of 2008 after completing an AA degree in aviation there. He began full-time work on June 28 at Dynamic Aviation, where he had served as an intern for the past two years. He was a 2006 graduate of Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, and a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.—*EMU*

EB responds to Yutzy report

GOSHEN, Ind.— During its June 10-12 meetings in Kalona, Iowa, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board took action on recommendations made by consultant LaVern Yutzy in his January "Report on Alignment Opportunities for Mennonite Church USA." The Executive Board adopted many of Yutzy's recommendations as written and revised others before adopting them.

Ervin Stutzman, executive director, and the Executive Board have created a document that contains Yutzy's original report and the approved recommendations. "Moving forward with alignment opportunities" is available at www.mennoniteusa.org/movingforward.—*Mennonite Church USA*

MC Canada giving problems

GOSHEN, Ind.—Giving by members of Mennonite Church Canada to its congregations has increased over the past few years, says Andrew Reesor-McDowell in the May 31 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, but contributions for Mennonite Church Canada have declined. Reesor-McDowell is moderator of Mennonite Church Canada.

"Donor support for MC Canada's centrally planned ministry has long been on a downward trend," Reesor-McDowell said, "significantly weakening our capacity to sustain strong partnerships, provide basic denominational ministry and services that maintain the health of the whole body."

According to Reesor-McDowell, congregational giving to MC Canada has decreased by $400,000—13 percent—over the last seven years.
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Interchurch Relations Consultation held

North Newton, Kan.— A biennial Interchurch Relations Consultation took place June 29-July 1 at Bethel College, North Newton, focusing on the theme "Giving and Receiving Gifts in the Body of Christ."

Thirty-six participants from five reference groups and local leaders gathered to worship, build relationships and discuss connections between Mennonite Church USA and Christians of other denominations.

Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, opened the gathering with a talk on "The Missional Church and Interchurch Relations." A panel made up of Lois Barrett, Calenthia Dowdy and Ched Myers discussed *The Great Emergence* by Phyllis Tickle.

Don Compier of the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) talked about that group's journey in becoming a peace church.
—*Joanna Shenk*

Gladys Terichow

A blanket mission

Cornelius Harder, a 92-year-old living in Niverville, Manitoba, has made more than 2,000 blankets since 1994. He gives them to Mennonite Central Committee for distribution. Harder uses a spare bedroom in his retirement community apartment to sew together precut patches he gets from MCC's Material Aid Center.—*MCC*

CPT partner plans protest against Arizona law

CHICAGO—Christian Peacemaker Teams' partner organization, Borderlinks, has called for applicants to participate in its "Solidarity Against Arizona Senate Bill 1070" delegation July 26-31. These dates intentionally span the date when SB1070 is scheduled to go into effect (July 29). Delegates will learn about the context in which SB1070 came about, connect with people in Arizona working against SB1070 and take part in actions planned by local change-makers on the 29th. Other parts of the delegation may include:

- speaking with migrant workers in Tucson;
- meeting with founders of the Sanctuary Movement, which originated in Tucson in the 1980s;
- visiting with immigration enforcement—Border Patrol and/or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—and visiting the Border Wall;
- recovering migrant belongings in the desert near migrant crossing;
- observing federal court proceedings of migrants about to be deported (Operation Streamline);
- strategizing with leaders working for immigration reform in Arizona.—*CPT*

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

New leadership for New York City churches

GOSHEN, Ind.—On April 23, the New York (N.Y.) Mennonite churches installed a new executive board. The event took place in the First Hispanic Mennonite Church in Brooklyn. The leadership team is comprised of pastors Nicolás Angustia, Celso Jaime, Moisés Angustia, and sisters Sandra Perez and Sony Carrión.

Keith Weaver, Lancaster Mennonite Conference moderator, and Warren Tyson, executive conference minister for Atlantic Coast Conference, presided over the ceremony. This project is unique due to the new challenge of working together with Lancaster and Atlantic Coast conferences. Sixteen Mennonite congregations will be involved from the city of New York, including churches from the Hispanic, Anglo, Garifuna and African-American traditions.—*From* Meno Acontecer, *translated by Andrew Clouse*

Fort Wayne pastor not allowed into U.S.

GOSHEN, Ind.—Silas Dauji, pastor of Fairhaven Mennonite in Fort Wayne, Ind., was denied re-entry into the United States when returning from Nigeria on June 21, despite holding a valid visa issued last year. Dauji had accompanied a Minnesota medical missionary group to Nigeria, where he ministers through Grace Community Development Agency. Fairhaven has supported his continuing ministry in Nigeria, where he travels regularly.

Immigration officials stopped him in Chicago and sent him back to Nigeria because of visa issues.

Fairhaven has contacted the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria asking for a waiver that would allow Dauji to return to Fort Wayne. He is hoping that intervention from U.S. contacts can help his case with officials in both the United States and Nigeria.

"God will take care of us, but this hurts more than anything," he wrote in an e-mail describing the situation.

Dauji's wife, Binta, and daughter Lisa continue to live in Fort Wayne. —*Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference*

Lindsey Kolb

Kites carry peace messages

Children fly the kites they created that include each of their personal "messages of peace." This was one of the final activities during Interfaith Peace Camp week June 28-July 2 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.—*EMU*

MWC news editor retires

STRASBOURG, France—After nine years of collecting information and writing news releases for Mennonite World Conference, Ferne Burkhardt retired as MWC news service editor in mid-June. Burkhardt, Petersburg, Ontario, served on the MWC staff as a volunteer. Replacing her is another Canadian—Byron Rempel-Burkholder, Winnipeg, Manitoba. He was the founding editor of *Leader* magazine and continues to edit *Rejoice*, an inter-Mennonite devotional magazine.

"MWC is extremely indebted to Ferne for her diligence and the skills she has brought to the task," says Larry Miller, MWC general secretary.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Philly school receives grant for weather program

PHILADELPHIA—Philadelphia Mennonite High School (PMHS) received a $3,500 grant from the Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial to support its WeatherBug Program.

Barbara Moses, principal of PMHS, says the funds will be used for the implementation of the WeatherBug weather station at the school along with an interactive software package to be used to enhance learning in math and science.

This program will help enhance the already strong environmental science program currently in place at the school. PMHS received first place in the citywide environmental science competition, the Envirothon, hosted by the Schuylkill Center. The school has $3,690 left to fund-raise for the program.—*PMHS*

Men need to develop an inner life to find healing from violence within

As we reel from the burgeoning violence in our world, particularly that done by men, we may wonder what causes this and what can be done. In his article "Boys Don't Cry" (*Sojourners*, July), Richard Rohr, founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.M., and a Franciscan priest and author, argues that much male anger is rooted in male sadness.

Rohr, who has worked for 20 years with men on retreats and rites of passage, in spiritual direction and in prison, writes that "it has become clear to me how trapped the typical Western male feels. He is trapped inside, with almost no inner universe of deep meaning to heal him or guide him."

Centuries of reinforcement for living an "outer" life of performances have led most males to see reality as one of competition, of winning or losing, Rohr claims.

"In such a worldview," he writes, "there are only winners or losers, no in-between, and little chance for growth or redemption once you are deemed—or deem yourself—a loser." Even the gospel in the West is taught in terms of reward or punishment.

Talk of healing or growth or inner spiritual development sounds strange to many men's ears. This leads, Rohr says, to their "having an absolutely huge shadow world and an unconscious agenda that largely calls the shots."

He defines "shadow world" as "all those aspects of our own memory and hurt that remain hidden in our unconscious, those things that we're not prepared to deal with at the moment." Spiritual healing, then, involves bringing those things to our awareness. Such awareness, Rohr says, is often both painful and consoling.

Rohr proposes telling a typical woman the following: "You are not to have any close friends or confidants; you are to avoid any show of need, weakness or tender human intimacy; you may not touch other women without very good reason; you may not cry; you are not encouraged to trust your inner guidance but only outer authorities and 'big' people; and you are to judge yourself by your roles, titles, car, house, money and successes. People are either in your tribe or they are a competitive threat—or of no interest." He concludes: "This is what it feels like to be a male, most of the time."

While males in our society have more outer options and chances for advancement, Rohr writes, "women have far more inner options and a richer inner life—even if equally neurotic."

Most men, he says, do not know how to identify, let alone share, their sadness, anger or grief—often about their love and losses or the world they once dreamed would happen.

Rohr has led male initiation rites for almost 15 years (www.malespirituality.org). These have shown him that "much male anger is actually male sadness."

Rohr criticizes the church for not encouraging an inner life. "It substitutes belief systems and belonging systems and moral systems for interior journeys toward God," he writes.

Much of this is due to "the male unwillingness to feel, to suffer, to lose and to stand in the place of the outsider with even basic empathy," he writes. "Which, of course, is exactly where Jesus stood and suffered." He asks, "How do we dare worship a 'loser' yet so idealize winning?"

Rohr calls churches to find ways to validate, encourage, structure and teach men an inner life. He concludes: "We need to help our men move beyond the self-defeating game of either-or and find the open and gracious space of the limitless, alive and God-given world that is in-between. Where all of us live anyway."—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann

IF MANKIND PERSISTS IN ITS GREEDY WAYS, THE EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED!
BY YOU COVERING ALL THE LAND WITH OCEAN?
BY YOU COVERING ALL THE OCEAN WITH OIL!!!

MISCELLANY

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “Church is an appointed gathering of named people in particular places who practice a life of resurrection in a world in which death gets the bigger headlines.” —*Eugene H. Peterson in* Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ

Imagine a black Tea Party

Imagine the public’s reaction if the Tea Party movement were dominated by blacks, writes Tim Wise at ephphatha-poetry.blogspot.com. What would happen if hundreds of African Americans rallied a few miles from the Capitol, some of them armed with AK-47s, handguns and ammunition? Imagine angry black protesters surrounding members of Congress, livid at their voting record. Imagine one of those protesters spitting on a congressman. And what would be the reaction if a black talk-show host were to predict a revolution? What would be the reaction if a black radio personality were to claim that rich, white people are destroying the country?—*The Christian Century*

Racial categories

- Racial categories listed in 1960 U.S. Census: **8**
- In 2010: **31**—*Yes! Magazine*

The language of a happy marriage

Here’s a quick guage to see how satisfied you and your partner are in your marriage—and perhaps an easy yet profound hint on the way to make it better: Just listen for the pronouns you use. Is it “I” and “me” or “we” and “us”? It turns out that couples that use “we language” are better at dealing with and resolving conflict than those who don’t.

Psychologists at the University of California analyzed conversations between 154 middle-aged and older spouses on points of disagreement in their marriages. What they found is that those who used pronouns like “we,” “our” and “us” behaved more positively toward one another and showed less physiological stress than couples who emphasized their “separateness” by using pronouns such as “I,” “me” and “you.” The use of such pronouns was most strongly linked to unhappy marriages.—*Spirituality & Health*

Dumping TVs

- Estimated number of TVs sent to U.S. recyclers following the June 2009 conversion to digital broadcasting: **27,790,564**
- Estimated tons of lead from those TVs that will be dumped in developing countries by purported U.S. “recyclers”: **56,000**

—*Yes! Magazine*

Long hours

Nearly a 10th of workers devote more than 12 hours a day to their profession in order to escape from personal problems, according to the International Labor Organization. Experts say working more than 50 hours a week could be a determining factor in work addiction.—*The Marketplace*

Water facts

- Each day, a U.S. household uses about 400 gallons of water. You can save more than that by skipping one quarter-pound hamburger.
- A 1 percent increase in organic matter allows it to hold 16,000 more gallons of water per acre.
- Putting water in plastic bottles and shipping them just 125 miles uses 1,100 times more energy than producing tap water.
- One quart of used motor oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water.
- Almost 20 percent of the world’s people live in areas where water is scarce.—*Yes! Magazine*

6 ways parents can help change eating and activity patterns in children

1. Stock the pantry with nutritious after-school snacks such as fresh and dried fruit, whole-grain pretzels, plain popcorn and granola cereal.
2. Instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, fruit drinks and fruit juice, switch to flavored seltzer and low-fat and fat-free milk.
3. Sit down to healthy, regularly scheduled family dinners. What parents eat, and how much, can help kids develop good eating patterns for life.
4. Start a vegetable garden where children can plant the greens of their choice.
5. Limit video game and TV time to two hours per day.
6. Plan physical activity—focused family outings, even if it’s only a walk or a bike ride. Families that play together stay healthy.—*Time Customing Publishing*

A singer for peace

"My world was turned upside-down," says Tony Brown—who found himself the only African-American in ▶

by Anna Groff

Tony Brown, who teaches at Hesston (Kan.) College, has used his singing talent to bring peace around the world.

the classroom as an 8-year-old in 1956. However, the school superintendent took Tony to other classrooms to sing. The other young children received his musical talent graciously—making a step toward breaking down racial barriers.

"[Music can turn] a tense situation into a soft one," says Tony. "Music is a way to get in and make an impact. Everyone can relate to and enjoy music."

Tony, 61, was born in Pittsburgh in the Hill District—a group of neighborhoods considered the cultural center of African-American life in the city. Tony's father spent his life as a pressman for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a major African-American, nationally-syndicated newspaper. Later his father worked for the *Post-Gazette*.

Avid newspaper readers, Tony's parents noticed an advertisement for a house and 10-acre farm for sale in the McDonald, Pa., area. They purchased the home and moved there with the hopes of enrolling their six children into a more rigorous school system. Tony's parents believed education was the key for success for their children, although both of them had 10th grade educations.

Tony, who felt the call to use music for peace at age 8 in those classrooms, now teaches at Hesston (Kan.) College and is the school's artist-in-residence.

"I'm still trying to listen to that call," he says.

Although the Oliver Brown vs. Board of Education ruling dismantled the legal basis for racial segregation in schools in 1954, Tony (no relation to Oliver Brown) was not welcome in some settings. But his singing voice offered security. For example, Tony remembers a neighbor woman who yelled at him and his siblings as they walked to the bus stop. This woman did not like the man who sold his house to the Brown family; she took out her anger on Tony and his siblings. Later, Tony learned that the woman chaired the school board and had argued with the superintendent, who encouraged Tony.

When the neighbor woman screamed at him, Tony remembered his mother's words, "Don't say anything, but repeat Psalm 23." His mother helped him understand that this woman was misinformed and a victim of her own fears. In fact, Tony's mother even paid visits to this woman's house, and later, when Tony was in high school, he learned that some members of that woman's family actually ate dinner at the Browns' house.

"My parents may not have been formally educated, but they were very wise," Tony says. "I knew a lot about peacemaking from my family even before I was introduced to the Mennonites."

Tony's life changed further after the move to McDonald. At age 16, Tony's aunt invited him to a youth retreat sponsored by their Bible Baptist Church in Cleveland. He agreed, and the retreat included a night at Camp Kidron in Ohio (a camp no longer in operation). The principal at Central Christian High School, Kidron, offered them a tour of the school. Afterward, Tony's aunt said, "I think this is your place; you should come here."

Music is a way to get in and make an impact. Everyone can relate to and enjoy music.
—Tony Brown

This nudge to attend a Mennonite school came out of years of his aunt hoping Tony would become a minister—a desire that Tony's mother prayed when she was pregnant with him. In Tony's family and extended family, everyone wanted this for him.

"At some level, I thought of myself as somebody who was going to make some kind of mark," Tony says, "but I didn't know what that was."

Tony found himself attracted to Kidron and Central. On Sunday of the retreat and after the tour of the school, the youth attended Kidron Mennonite Church. Tony heard a cappella singing for the first time.

"I was moved," Tony says. "When the man took his pitch pipe and blew into it, the group sang as though they were a choir."

Tony spent his junior and senior years at Central Christian. Back in Pennsylvania, he had attended a school with students from Polish, Irish and Italian backgrounds. But in Ohio, the Mennonite students were mostly of Swiss-German descent.

"They had a profound sense of community and were identified by the church they went to," he says.

He was the only African-American student at that school, but there was an African student from the Republic of Niger—with whom Tony shared a host family. Tony calls this cross-cultural experience "life-changing." His time at Central also provided self-exploration.

"At Central, I became a little more self-confident about my gifts," he says.

Tony easily made friends with his peers, too, although he was breaking ground in 1965 as the first African-American student at Central Christian. Tony admits he faced some social challenges, such as limitations in the girls he could date.

"You're 16," he says, "you're AA, you've got personality, people like you—that could be potentially threatening to some parents."

Following Jesus is not something that needs the prerequisite of culture, race or nationality.
—Tony Brown

Teachers at Central introduced Tony to Anabaptist martyrs who died for their faith. Tony says the martyrs' courage and strength impressed him. He studied Mennonite history at the same time the civil rights movement was "shaking up this country," so he drew comparisons between these groups of people.

In his commencement address at Hesston College on May 9, Tony again made the connection to 20th-century martyrs.

"I was moved by the courage of these 20th-century martyrs who [also] died for their faith," Tony said. "Both narratives—while situated in unfortunate cultural circumstances—transcended culture. Following Jesus is not something that needs the prerequisite of culture, race or nationality."

In addition to his faith development, Tony also "sang an awful lot" at Central—especially under the encouragement and instruction of music teacher Robert Ewing. His musical experience in high school culminated at graduation, when Ewing assigned Tony to conduct a choir of his peers.

After his high school graduation, Tony planned to attend Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta, since he intended to become a minister or missionary. However, his plans changed after talking with Esther Diener—the mother of his friend Larry—who steered him in another direction. She questioned the fit of that school for Tony and told him that some people at Prairie Bible considered Martin Luther King Jr. a Communist.

Soon after, Esther called Tony's parents and then called Tillman Smith, Hesston's president, to refer Tony to Hesston. Smith accepted Tony without a formal application. One week later, Tony made the trip to Hesston with his friend Larry and his parents.

"My getting to Hesston College was fortuitous," Tony said in the commencement address this year, "and president Smith and I had many conversations about that in the years that followed. I felt so honored to know him and later to be able to call him my friend."

At Hesston, Tony immersed himself in more music and considered making music his major. He also enrolled in many Bible classes. Tony cites his music instructor, Lowell Byler, as an individual who moved his musicianship to the next level. Byler saw Tony's musical promise and helped nurture him personally and professionally.

After Hesston, Tony went on to finish at Goshen (Ind.) College, where he continued his involvement with music. There, his mentor, Atlee Beechy, told him to keep singing and use it for peace. Tony earned his B.A. in psychology at Goshen in 1971.

During three years at Goshen, Tony came to the conclusion he did not want to be a pastor, despite his family's wishes.

"I had good people skills and compassion for people," he says. "But I wasn't interested in preaching."

In 1973, he married his first wife, Joann Sprunger. In 1979, he earned his Master of Social Work degree at the University of Pennsylvania. From 1980 to 1983, Tony taught at Goshen.

But in Goshen, Tony faced an extreme act of hostility (see box below). On Mother's Day in 1983, some arsonists set the back of Tony's house on fire, damaging the carport and totaling his car.

"When you're an African-American," he says, "and something like this happens to you, you have to ask if you're a victim of a random act or if this is an overt racist statement. How can you prove that?

"Racism is etched into the psyche of this country and operates at the conscious and unconscious levels," Tony says. "As long as I'm African-American, I'm going to be vulnerable to racial incidents occurring to me or other people of color that I know. … We still live in the legacy of Jim Crow. Even at the highest levels of our church, racism is a problem."

In 1983, Tony and Joann moved to Seattle,

We still live in the legacy of Jim Crow. Even at the highest levels of our church, racism is a problem.
—Tony Brown

What I am doing transcends race

People of color are often racialized when people want to write about them. One could ask all the women when interviewing them to tell about the many incidents of sexism they experienced in their lives, but this is not standard practice. I am not ashamed of my life experience, but what I am doing transcends race and connects people. My life is so much more than any negative racial experiences I might have encountered, and this is where we can focus. When we get to the place where we transcend the social construct of race when relating to each other, we will have advanced civilization. My life as a citizen of the world is much larger than any personal experiences with race I might have experienced. I am amazed at the many times I have seen in my travels how people can meet each other at the common places of human experience. Our human connections to each other are profound when we can get past our tendency to magnify how we are different.—*Tony Brown* where he spent 17 years as the assistant director of the counseling center at the University of Washington. He also taught in the graduate school of social work. While there, he studied voice with renowned baritone Julian Patrick, and his work with Patrick moved his music career to another level.

In 2000, Tony began teaching at Hesston. This year, Tony finished a tour, “Common Threads,” with Hesston faculty member John Sharp. The program gives voice to Anabaptist martyrs and enslaved African-Americans by singing their hymns and telling their stories.

Shari Leidig-Holland, a member of Pittsburgh Mennonite Church, first met Tony at the Cross Cultural Youth Conventions in the late 1970s and at the “black caucus” meetings for the Mennonite Church that she attended with her family. Later, Tony was Shari’s social work professor at Goshen College.

“He was an inspiration to me in that context as we talked about justice and equity as it related to the vocation of a social worker,” she says. “I resonate a lot with Tony as a fellow psychotherapist engaged in what it means to be a peacemaker.

“I think his connection between art and music and peacemaking is needed so much in our world,” she says.

Tony’s new major project, “Peacing It Together Foundation,” brings together his musical ability, his passion for peace and his love of travel. The foundation was officially founded in 2007.

The project’s mission statement says it is “to serve the global community as a resource and catalyst for the work of peace and social justice, using music and the spoken word to uplift areas of despair to hope.”

The hope is to provide musicians who have a passion for peace the opportunity to use their music to promote peace and justice around the world.”

Although the foundation did not begin until 2007, Tony’s first peace-related trip occurred in 2002.

“The seeds of this organization were planted and come out of my early childhood years as well as out of a Mennonite context,” he says. “This is an outgrowth of the peace work Mennonites do. We’re just trying to extend it through the use of music.”

Tony offers several stories from his travels that demonstrate the power of music in bringing about peace.

When in Bosnia in 2002, he sang for a group of people that embodied the different sides of the conflict there. Serbs, Croats, Muslims and Jews all gathered in the standing-room-only concert hall. Tony thought he would sense tension in the room. But after he had the audience sing together several times, everyone softened.

“That evening of singing was incredibly electric,” he says. “I found that doing music there was more than just giving a performance. … Something transformative happened.”

This 2002 event laid the foundation

Tony Brown addresses schoolchildren in Northern Ireland.

Photo provided

for Tony's current work, now extended to other countries all over the world.

In 2007, he took one of three trips to Northern Ireland sponsored by the Quakers. He attended a meeting between the leaders and their families of two major paramilitary groups—the Irish Republican Army and the Ulster Defense Association. Along with Irish folk singer Tommy Sands, Tony told stories, sang and led the audience in singing. Afterward, one man thanked them for coming, and the man wept. Leaders from the two paramilitary groups continue to meet and use music when they come together.

Tony's work involves planning for visits to the Philippines, East Africa and West Africa.

In May 2007, in Ethiopia, Tony brought together Orthodox Christians and Muslims—who remain in tension with one another. Muslim chanters joined Brown. But the Christian leaders prohibited the Christians from joining the stage and sharing it with Muslims. However, the individuals talked and greeted one another during the reception following. Brown believes the music in the concert set the stage for interaction between opposing sides.

Now back in Hesston, Tony's work involves planning for visits to the Philippines, East Africa and West Africa. The West African trip came about when he received a phone call from people living in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo and Nigeria who want him to visit for a month this year. However, it may be rescheduled to 2011.

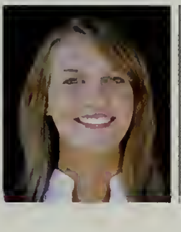
"The prospect of that is really exciting for me," he says, "particularly in Ghana, where the slave trades occurred."

Tony traveled to Uganda in June 2009 to bring supplies and equipment to the Anthony Brown Comprehensive School, which serves formerly abducted child soldiers in northern Uganda. The trip was made possible through fund-raising efforts by Hesston Mennonite Church. He made his first visit to Uganda in 2006, when he laid the cornerstone for the school.

He will travel to Mexico in December to perform and speak on behalf of the Mujeres de Maiz Opportunity Foundation, an organization that aims to provide resources for indigenous women in rural central Mexico who want to further their education. In October, Tony plans to travel to Haiti to sing and speak in an attempt to assist in trauma reduction in the earthquake aftermath.

While Tony's membership continues at Seattle Mennonite Church, he attends Hesston Mennonite. This fall, he and Erika, his wife, will move to Albuquerque, N.M., for Erika to continue her education. Tony will continue working for Hesston—teaching classes online, continuing ambassadorial work for Hesston College and returning to campus every three weeks.

To read Tony's blogs about his trips, go to www.anthonybrownbaritone.net, and for more information on his foundation, go to www.peacingit-together.org.

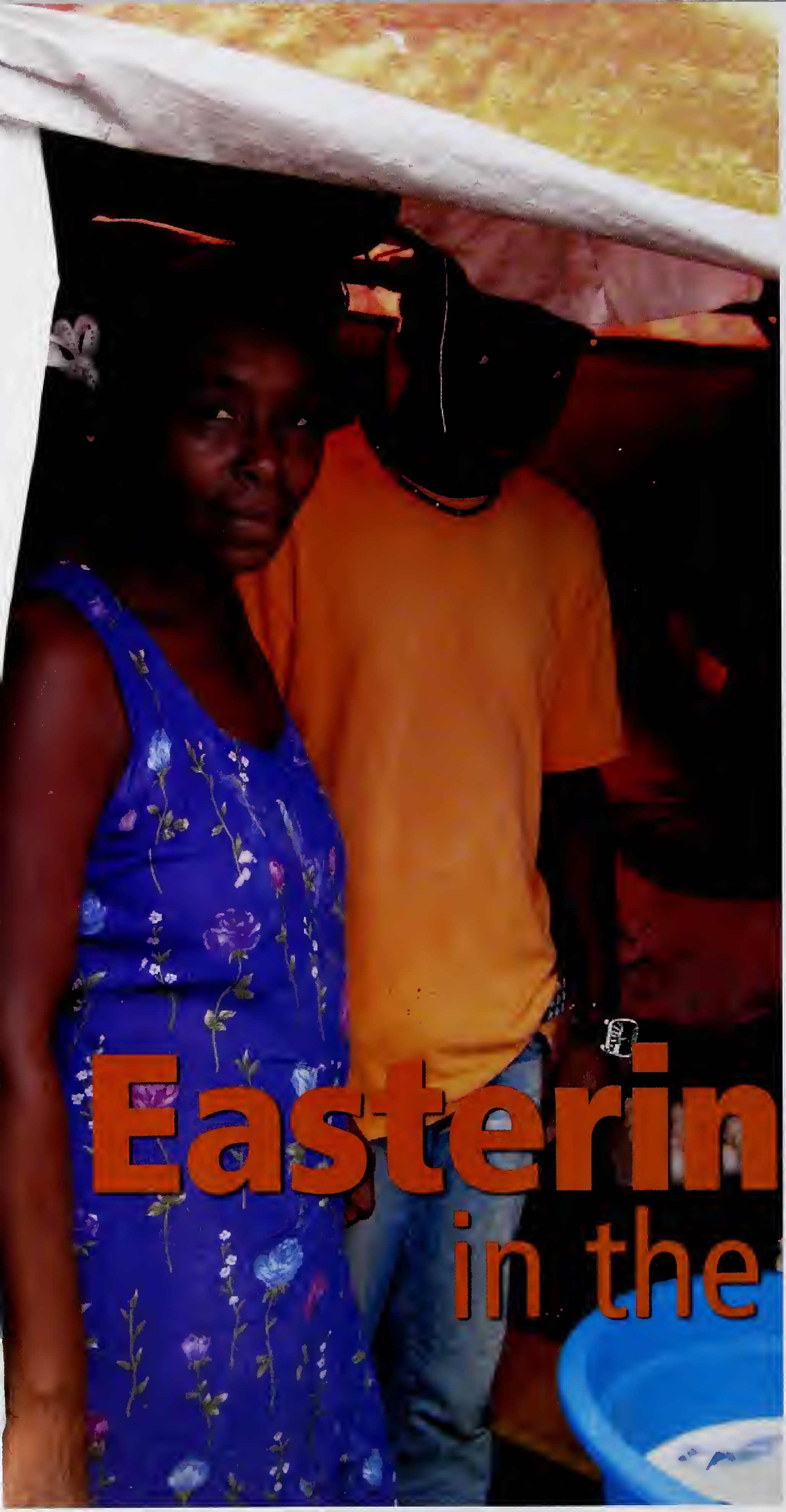


Anna Groff is associate editor of The Mennonite.

Eastering in the rubble

Three months after the earthquake, Haitians were still sleeping in tents. The Haitian government hadn't yet given permission for people to begin rebuilding, and even when it did, Haitians were afraid of another earthquake and too frightened to sleep indoors.

by Rhonda Miller



Michelle Louis Jacques and her 17-year-old son Billy at the door to their tent in the tent city of 50,000 in Port-au-Prince.

Photo by Rhonda Miller

Haitian brothers and sisters have much to teach us about faith, generosity, gratefulness, grace and Easter.

Part of my work with Mennonite Central Committee was as chauffeur and translator for American engineers that had come at MCC's request to help assess the safety of buildings. We visited some homes that required major work to be inhabitable again, but we also saw homes where the engineers assured people that the damages were only cosmetic and told them it was fine to reenter their homes and even sleep in them. Each time they gave this suggestion, people shook their heads, "I won't ever sleep inside again." Their fear is understandable.

I visited our friends Michelle and Pierre and their three children in the largest tent city in Port-au-Prince. The tent city is on the grounds of the only golf course in Haiti, one of the few green spaces in the city that before the earthquake was open to members only. The grass is gone, and in its place is hard-packed earth, which turns to mud in the rain. This particular tent city had around 50,000 people living in it.

Michelle and Pierre's tent was a makeshift 10-by-10-foot shelter made of tarps. There was no space outside, so Michelle spent her days cooking for her family and washing their clothes by hand inside this small shelter. She said that during a recent thunderstorm Pierre had to hang from the makeshift rafter inside the tent and use his full body weight to keep their tent from blowing away. They slept on cement blocks so that the water ran under their bed instead of through it when it rained.

As we talked, I said, "Michelle I'm so sorry that you have to live here right now." She said, "We have it good; we are being well taken care of; we have health care, water, food and security at night." I was caught off guard by her appreciation for the little she had and was reminded of how hard daily life was for her even before the earthquake.

I visited our friend Guerline, and met for the first time her husband, Cesar, and their 3-year-old son David. She and her family sleep in a tent with 17 others. There isn't enough space in the yard for more than one tent. She was honest with me during our afternoon together about her fears and all that has been lost in the earthquake. She mentioned a loss I hadn't considered, even a space for a private moment between husband and wife has been lost.

Jimmy, a soft-spoken 26-year-old who was one of the teenage boys in our neighborhood when we lived in Haiti, pulled me to the side one day when I visited his family. "Could you help me get a job with your organization? It's embarrassing to be 26 years old and not have a job. I feel like I have no future, and it's next to impossible to get a job here unless you have connections." He had work for a short time, but his only payment was one meal a day. He took the job in hopes that he could prove himself to his employers as a valuable employee. It didn't lead anywhere, so he didn't stay working there. Jobs are hard to find, but there's no dignity or future in working for one meal a day.

The rest of the world wants and needs to help, but in doing so Haiti's fragile economy is at risk of being undermined.

Then there are the complicated concerns and questions about relief aid and development work. The rest of the world wants and needs to help, but in doing so Haiti's fragile economy is at risk of being undermined. For years aid has been brought in from the outside, and the unintended consequence of this aid is that it hurts Haitian businesses. Food aid hurts Haitian farmers and the market women that sell food grown in Haiti. Bill Clinton publicly apologized this past March for his part in the free market policies that destroyed Haiti's rice production. He said, "It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked. It was a mistake." Free health care since the earthquake is a gift for so many Haitians but leaves Haitian medical personnel struggling to make ends meet. Free distribution of drinking water since the earthquake has affected available jobs in the country because the factory owner can't afford to pay his employees. All aid comes with questions about the future.

Haitians have functioned without a security net for a long time. The earthquake has only added to the weight on their shoulders. Now even the ground beneath their feet feels unsure.

On the drive to the MCC guesthouse from the airport I saw my first glimpses of post-earthquake Port-au-Prince. The devastation is mind boggling,

Michelle and Pierre Louis Jacques in the tent city

Photo by Rhonda Miller

yet I experienced hope as I observed that life was continuing amid the rubble. Paths had been cleared, many by hand, through the debris so that vehicles could pass through. Street vendors and market women were selling along the street, people were out and about, children were playing, life continues. Seeing these familiar sights gave me hope. Haitian lives have been greatly disrupted, but they persevere just the same.

I came to offer them my love and concern, and here I was being cared for by my friends.

I felt hope when we learned that the Haitian government had begun an organized plan to have Haitian engineers assess buildings throughout the city. When MCC learned this, the decision was made to shift the focus of MCC engineers from assessing buildings to providing workshops for builders to encourage and teach safer building practices.

I went to Haiti to help, to walk in solidarity with our friends and to offer a listening ear to their heartache. I took gifts of tents, tarps and money that my congregation helped send, and those were gratefully received. But repeatedly I found myself on the receiving end of their generosity, hospitality and care.

Gabriel and Marie invited me to spend Sunday afternoon with them. When I arrived at their home, they told me they had prepared a bucket of water for me to use to bathe. When I said, "No thanks, I am fine", they insisted. "It's hot, Rhonda. You'll feel refreshed, please bathe, we want you to be comfortable." My cold bucket bath felt like a baptism of sorts—refreshing, life-giving, full of love. Marie and Geralda prepared a wonderful Haitian meal of salad, rice, chicken, fried plantains, spicy coleslaw and cold lime juice. They made much more than I could possibly eat and chided me for not eating more. "We know you don't get to eat Haitian food often. Eat more, eat enough for your husband, too, since he's not here to eat with us today." I savored the tastes and the love that went into the meal. After eating, I noticed their son Jimmy was pulling bedding items out of their tent and taking them behind their house, but I didn't know why. A short time later, Marie asked me to come with her to the back of the house. She led me to a bed they had made for me in the shade. "Now your stomach is full, you need to rest." I protested, "I didn't come to sleep, I came to visit with you and your family." She said, "There will be time to visit after you rest. We know you've worked hard all week, and we want you to rest at our home." At her insistence I took a short nap. I awoke refreshed and rejuvenated and enjoyed the rest of the afternoon visiting with the family. I came to offer them my love and concern, and here I was being cared for by my friends.

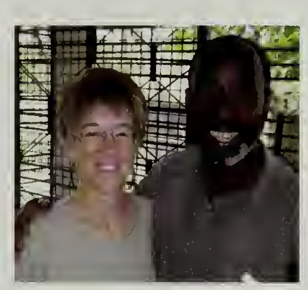
Before I left Haiti, friends came to the MCC guesthouse bringing gifts for me and my family. They remembered that when we lived in Haiti, Lance, my husband, had enjoyed flying kites with kids in our neighborhood, and so they brought Haitian kites for him and our children. There is a wonderful tradition in Haiti of flying kites around Easter. The kites they gave as gifts have messages on them that read in Haitian Creole: "The earthquake throws you" but also, "Life is not over" and, "Haiti won't perish." Messages of hope on small fragile kites; the symbolism is powerful.

I had taken Gabriel a pair of work boots and was disappointed to realize that they were too small for him. When I apologized, he shrugged and said he would share them with someone else. Before I left, he traced my foot and returned the next day with a pair of Haitian sandals that fit me perfectly. Knowing my love of music, they brought Haitian CDs, and in thanks to our children for sharing me with them, they sent Haitian flags for our kids.

I ran into a few friends on my way to the market to purchase Haitian coffee to serve back home in Iowa at church. When they learned what I was doing, they insisted on going to the market for me and purchasing the coffee as a gift for my congregation. These friends, whose lives have been so hurt by poverty and devastating circumstances, have a wealth of deep-seated grace and generosity.

And I can't forget to mention gratitude. I have thought of this often since my return home. They are so grateful for the generosity of the world in this moment of crisis. They are so thankful to be alive, because, as they told me, "Life is all that really matters." MCC workers in country speak of hearing singing in the darkness in the nights that followed the earthquake, songs of praise to God for life. Haitians trust that God walks with them intimately as they move forward in uncertain times. While in the tent city and feeling overwhelmed by the immensity of need, I was taking a video at Gabriel's insistence. A small, yellow butterfly flitted through my camera lens, surprising me with its presence. I experienced the gift of its appearance in my camera lens as a tangible reminder to me of Jesus' Easter words: "And remember, I am with you always."

The first morning I was in Haiti, I heard singing. The words to the song were "Mesi Senye." (Thank you, Lord.) These two simple words, sung over and over, were simple but powerful for their very simplicity. I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was. Haitians have lost family, friends, homes and the sense of solid ground beneath their feet, yet still they sing, "Thank you, Lord." Their clarity of faith stuns and challenges me. I have much to learn from my Haitian brothers and sisters about faith, generosity, gratefulness, grace and Easter.



Rhonda Miller is a member of First Mennonite Church of Iowa City. She and her husband lived in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as Mennonite Central Committee volunteers from 1995 to 1998. They returned to Haiti March 14-27 to assist MCC with its work after the earthquake. She is pictured above with her friend Gabriel Senat.

Life in the tent city.

Photo by Rhonda Miller

Thomas said to him (Jesus), "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" —John 14:5

The example of Thomas helps us be honest in our relationship with God.

Thomas the man who was

Next to Peter, Thomas is my favorite disciple. Why? Because he's so like me.

Over the years, he's been called "doubting Thomas" because he insisted on touching Jesus' wounds before he believed in his resurrection. However, I'd guess he wasn't the only disciple who questioned and wondered but the only one who had the courage to ask.

Look at the situation in which he asked the above question.

The disciples are huddled with Jesus in the "upper room" on the night before his death. He is giving them his final words, prophecies and instructions. Jesus has just finished telling them he is going to the "Father's house ... to prepare a place for [them]" and that "you know the way to the place where I am going" (John 14:2, 4).

Was Thomas the only one who asked himself, What in the world is he talking about? Where is he going? And why does he think we know the way?

Of course not. None of them knew what was coming—Jesus' betrayal, arrest, suffering and death. Or, if they did, they buried the clues deep in denial. Jesus' words about "the way" and "the Father's house" must have sounded like enigmatic gibberish to them. But no one asked him except Thomas.

Like the student in class who is unable to fake understanding, the one who cares enough to want to "get it," he alone raises his hand and protests, "But teacher—"

That's why I love him. Because I was that kind of student, too.

After the Resurrection, when Thomas walks into the disciples' prayer meeting and declares, "Unless I ... put my finger in the mark of the

honest with God

by Wynne Gillis

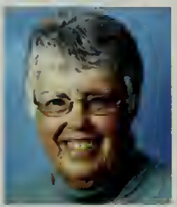
We can tell God we don't understand, even when it looks like everyone else does. We can ask God the hard questions.

nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25), he is again being exactly himself. Honest Thomas. The one who is brave enough to give voice to them all.

Notice that Jesus does not reject him or even refuse him. Graciously, he allows Thomas to do what he needs to do in order to believe. Even his rebuke—"Be not faithless but believing" (KJV)—is mild. Jesus accepts Thomas just as he is, doubts, questions and all.

And because he does, the rest of us can be totally honest with our God. We can tell God we don't understand, even when it looks like everyone else does. We can ask God the hard questions. We can even get angry with God without fearing we'll be reduced to a smoking ash. (As someone once told me, "Do you think God doesn't know?")

Faith, at its heart, is a relationship with God. And any relationship worth its salt needs to be honest.



Ask Honest Thomas. Ask me.

Wynne Gillis lives in Bozeman, Mont.

The Great Commandment

Our Anabaptist forefathers quoted the Great Commission more than any other Scripture. This was their driving force. Mission has its roots in intimacy with Jesus. In our intimacy with him we are overwhelmed with his love. We can't help but share that love with others. Intimacy results in being obedient to the Great Commandment, i.e. loving God with all our hearts. This love is expressed as we obey the Great Commission, sharing God's love in word and deed.

I'll make you fish for people.—Matthew 4:19

We hold meetings to define and defend fishing. We state that fishing is one of our core values. We have conferences on how best to fish. We read books on the latest fishing methods and train people to fish. We build buildings so we can come together to encourage fishing. But are we fishers if we never catch fish?

I wish Jesus would have been more "orthodox" when he said to Peter and Andrew, "I'll make you fish for people." I expected him to say, "Follow me. I'll show you how to love the Lord God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength" or, "Follow me, I'll show you how to be my disciple." Fishing for people sounds too assertive, confrontational.

We have reacted to the direct approaches of zealous Christians in the '70s and '80s who gave little thought to building relationships as they shared the Good News. We bought Saint Francis' statement that in essence said: "Witness 24/7, if necessary, use words." That's like saying, "Wash yourself, if necessary, use water." We would all be lost if Jesus had not used words along with his life of sacrificial service.

Why are we so averse to using words in our witness? We have rightly emphasized serving our Lord and walking in love and humility. But too often we are shy in sharing the good things Jesus does for us on a daily basis.

Both authority and power

Jesus has given us the authority (Matthew 28:18-20). As a substitute schoolteacher I had authority because the superintendent placed me in the classroom. We have authority since we are seated with Jesus in heavenly places above all the power of the devil and his forces (Ephesians 1:18-23, 2:6). In addition he has given us the power to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). While I had the authority as a substitute teacher, I sometimes found it difficult to have the power or influence to assert control in the classroom. Jesus gave us both the authority and the power (2 Timothy 1:7). Paul was not ashamed to take the Good News to the capital of the world because he knew its power to save all who believe (Romans 1:16).

Have we lost our passion for the unchurched? Do we pray more for the unchurched or for our physical needs? How do we develop passion for the lost? I have found praying the following daily prayer helps to keep my passion hot: "Father, you gave your only Son for me. I don't have your depth of compassion. Give me your passion. Jesus, you gave your life for me, I don't have that degree of passion. Give me your passion. Holy Spirit, you left heaven in all its splendor to come and live in my sinful heart to make me holy. I don't have that love and passion for others. Give me your compassion. Amen."

Jesus' primary emotional response to people was compassion. He saw people as sheep that had been beaten and bruised. Rather than being filled with disdain, he was filled with love. He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). Paul likewise had a continual sorrow for his lost friends (Romans 9:2-3). He writes that God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We're Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). An ambassador has an urgent and critical task.

As we mature, our love for others increases. How is it we can work beside someone at the of- ▶

and the Great Commission

by David Eshleman

lave we lost our passion for the unchurched?

We have rightly emphasized serving our Lord and walking in love and humility. But too often we are shy in sharing the good things Jesus does for us on a daily basis.

fice or shop and never get around to sharing the Good News of abundant life in Christ? Paul made much of his life in Christ so others would realize what they were missing (Romans 11:14). He reminds us that through our lives the fragrance of Christ is spread to everyone (2 Corinthians 2:14). He asked for prayer that whenever he opens his mouth, words may be given him so he could fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19). Peter and John could not keep quiet about what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

In the parable of the great banquet, Jesus instructs the servant to compel people to come to the banquet (Luke 14:23). I checked 16 different translations: six read, "make them come in," four "compel," three "urge," two "force them" and one "drag them." The Greek word means that this is of necessity. Do I have this sense of urgency to bring my lost neighbors to the banquet?

Who are we to invite?

In the parable of the wedding banquet, Jesus tells the servant to bring in the good and bad (Matthew 22:10). The Greek word we translate "bad" appears 25 times in Matthew. This is the only time it is translated "bad" in the King James. Sixteen times it is translated "evil" and eight times "wicked." We are to invite the good people, the volunteer firemen and volunteer crossing guards, the Red Cross workers and schoolteachers but also the "bad" or "wicked" people. Do we shy away from both the good and the bad? Jesus' brother Jude wrote, "Save others by snatching them out of the fire" (Jude 23).

We are sent

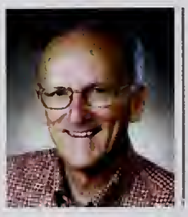
Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 17:18 and 20:21). The Father did not give Jesus $1 million, then have Jesus turn around and give us $10. No, what the Father gave Jesus he gives us. That's why Jesus adds, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23). We are joint heirs with Christ; what he receives from the Father we receive (Romans 8:17).

When I see a U-Haul in my community, I don't need to pray to discern if I should stop and welcome the new family and find out if they have a church or if they have faith in Jesus. I can pray for wisdom to know when to stop, what to say or what to take as a welcoming gift. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, he included anyone moving into your community.

When we hear the word every Sunday but do not apply it, we stymie our relationship with Christ.

Unless I take Christ to the workplace and to my neighbors, the Lord will not add to the church those who are being saved. I believe one of our most frequently used Scripture passages is Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." In the following verses we are told that the Lord verified his word through mighty acts as the people supplied needs of others. The result was that the Lord added daily those who were being saved (v. 47). If the Lord is not adding to our churches, let's ask ourselves if we are doing what the early church did in vv. 42-46. We earnestly teach, fellowship, pray and celebrate the Lord's Supper. Are we lacking in the miracles, or do we experience his miracles every day and don't share them with others? Are we sharing our material possessions as others have needs? When we hear the word every Sunday but do not apply it, we stymie our relationship with Christ. We need to repent of dead works, i.e. works that do not bring fruit.

It's fascinating that the only way we know for sure to bring joy in heaven is to lead a person to Jesus (Luke 15:7, 10, 24, 32). We can worship, study our Bible, fellowship, serve and do 101 things for Jesus, but the only time we are told that heaven rejoices is when someone comes to faith in Jesus. All this points to the fact that there is one overarching purpose for God's children, i.e. to share Jesus. We must be mission driven. That's why God sent Jesus (John 3:16), that's why Jesus came (Luke 19:10), that's why the Holy Spirit comes upon us (Acts 1:8). The devil will do his best to cause us to be religious as long as we don't share Jesus with our neighbors. Let's go forth in the authority and power that Jesus gave and boldly proclaim the Good News.



Dave Eshleman is a church consultant for Lancaster Conference and Eastern Mennonite Missions. His last church, Capital Christian Fellowship near Washington D.C., grew from 45 to nearly 400. He has authored Now Go Forward, Reaching Out to Grow Your Congregation *(Herald Press).*

Following Jesus into Starbucks

I am a pastor, and it is my habit to reserve Fridays to prepare for Sundays. I look forward to Fridays. On Fridays, I clear my desk of all the mail and the coffee cups and the meeting minutes and the three-ring binders and the sticky notes that provide archeological evidence of my work throughout the week. ▶

Following Jesus into Starbucks

by Mark Schloneger

I make space for my Bible, for articles that I've picked up along the way, for new sticky notes. (I love sticky notes.) This has become a kind of ritual for me, a way to prepare for Sunday's sermon. I don't want clutter when I'm thinking and praying and meditating on God's Word. My desk has to be clean so I can concentrate.

Being a follower of Jesus means putting your entire self in the space that Jesus fits you.

That's why, after rereading the Scripture for my sermon on Sunday, I abandoned my clean desk for Starbucks. There the music of guitar-strumming singer-songwriters plays through the speakers. Baristas mix mochas and frothing cappuccinos and blend fruit smoothies. People sit around tables talking, laughing, working, smoking and drinking drinks such as tall-nonfat-pumpkin-spice-extra whip-decaf-double-shot lattes.

"Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' " (Mark 8:27). And they told him what they had been hearing. "But who do you say that I am?" Jesus asked. And Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah" (v. 29). And he was right on that but wrong on what that meant.

Jesus taught them that he would undergo great suffering, that he would be rejected by the powerful people—the elders, the chief priests, the scribes—that he would be killed and would rise again in three days. But when Peter would have none of this dying talk, Jesus rebuked him. "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (v. 33).

It's here that Jesus called the crowd together with his disciples. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to become my follower, let them deny themselves, pick up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it" (vv. 34-35). Being a disciple, a follower of Jesus, does not mean clearing out a space so Jesus fits in. Being a follower of Jesus means putting your entire self in the space that Jesus fits you.

On that Friday, for me, that space was Starbucks. I spent over four hours there, and I went up to 15 people and asked them for help in preparing a project I was working on. My "project" was Sunday's sermon. This was awkward, I admit, both for me and for them. I tried to be careful about how I presented myself.

I talked with a young couple smoking cigarettes outside; a group of three women supporting each other after their children went off to college; a business owner taking a break; an older couple silently sucking down large frappaccinos; a woman who had brought trip photos to show her good friend; a man and a woman with accents originating from I-have-no-idea-where; a young man with pierced ears, his feet up on the table and his nose inside a book; a teenager doing homework while listening to her iPod; and a man and women with tattooed arms who identified themselves as Wiccans (I had the best conversation with them.). This was completely opposite of the way I normally prepare for Sundays. This was not my safe, quiet office with the clean desk.

I asked these people two questions, and I was surprised at the conversations I had. My questions were these: First, who is Jesus; and second, how can you tell who is a follower of Jesus?

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" The people at Starbucks that Friday afternoon said many things. They said Jesus is a God-man, a great moral teacher, the Savior, the second person in the Trinity, the Son of God and "a pretty cool guy." Four of them said, "I don't know." "It's spiritual," one explained.

As for the second question, about how you can tell whether someone is a follower of Jesus, I got a wide variety of responses. Everyone agreed that you can't usually tell at first glance. And beyond that, it's still hard. The businessman said you can really only tell by how the person responds to stress. He emphasized that you can't tell by who goes to church. The older woman said she knew people were Christians because they prayed before their meals. Most people aren't outward about it, said another. Sometimes, it's just intuitive, two women agreed. Others said you can pick out followers of Jesus because they don't lie, they live a joyful life, they do good, they love others.

The young man with his feet up on the table said that here, in these parts, being a Christian is just assumed, understood. It wasn't that way when he lived in L.A. and Chicago. Here, you just look at someone and you assume they are a Christian, especially if they are white and have a certain look. (I thought he was talking about me, and I felt the urge to mess up my hair a bit.) "Also," he said, "they sometimes preach at you." I moved on.

The Wiccan couple said you certainly can't tell who's a Christian by what they say. The woman believed that basically all religions teach the same thing about not harming your neighbor. But to her, Christians need to relearn that basic rule because their golden rule of "love thy neighbor" has become "judge thy neighbor."

When they asked about me, I mentioned that I was a Mennonite pastor. The man said his ex-wife was a Mennonite from Kansas. For a second, I thought I was about to play the "Mennonite game" with a Wiccan drinking an iced café latte at Starbucks. But he went on to tell a story about how, during the Vietnam War, he asked his wife's church whether they would provide him sanctuary if he was drafted. They refused because he wasn't a member. This was one of the reasons he turned his back on Christianity.

How can you tell if someone is a follower of Jesus? Well, based on what the coffee-loving people of Starbucks said that Friday, it's hard to tell. But whatever it is, it didn't sound to me like it's the way of Jesus.

Jesus said, "If anyone wants to become my follower, let them deny themselves, pick up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?"

Being a follower of Jesus does not mean carving out a space in our lives for the presence of God. It means making our lives a space carved out for the presence of God.

Following Jesus means giving our "clutter" to God—our time, our work, our thoughts, our everyday tasks, whether they are at home, at work, in grocery stores or at Starbucks.

That means we don't need to declutter first, at least in the sense of putting aside the things that take up our time and attention for most of the week. No, following Jesus means giving our "clutter" to God—our time, our work, our thoughts, our everyday tasks, whether they are at home, at work, in grocery stores or at Starbucks. God wants it all, because God wants all of us.

The life of a disciple is not limited to special religious times or places, the spaces we carve out to give. No, Jesus asks his disciples for their lives. That's because our God is much greater than the gaps we create for him.

At Starbucks, amid the din, I think I heard Jesus echoing back to me the questions I had posed to others.

"What about you? Who do you say that I am? How will people know if you are my disciple?"

Mark Schloneger is pastor of Springdale Mennonite Church in Waynesboro, Va. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave at Springdale Mennonite Church on Sept. 13, 2009.

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Coffeeshop church

by Joe Sherer

One afternoon I was prompted to take my laptop and work at a local coffee shop. Actually I hoped to find college students there who I wanted to engage in conversation. When I got to the shop, the place was empty of customers. So much for my plan, I thought. Instead I struck up a conversation with the woman working the counter. Eventually I learned her name is Martha, although she goes by Marty. I ordered a coffee, then allowed her to talk me into a monster cookie, which I should have resisted.

A conversation with a contemporary Martha and Mary

"So do you get a lot of college students here?" I asked. Marty said the college students tend to stay on campus and spend their coffee cash there. We talked about the community, and I told Marty I've just begun as pastor of the Mennonite church in town. "Tell me," I asked, "what does this community need from its churches?" Marty immediately talked about people who can't afford food and those who are homeless. The church could be doing more to help people with tangible needs, Marty said.

"Are the churches here relevant?" I asked. "How do you see them?" Marty was opening up. She candidly told me she felt churches here, maybe everywhere, tend to be exclusive, serving themselves rather than others. Religion doesn't seem to go beyond Sunday morning. She did allow that Mennonites tend to do a little better at living out our faith than others.

During our conversation a pajama-clad high school student came in and ordered a muffin and something to drink. After serving her, Marty came out and sat down at the table between the one I sat at with my coffee and monster cookie and the table where Mary, the high school girl, sat with her muffin. Our conversation continued, and Mary was drawn into it.

Marty made it clear that church was something she had tried, a classic "been there done that" response. Church isn't for her, prayer doesn't work and she claims she's really not concerned with spiritual things. In response to a question, Mary piped up, admitting her struggle with how God can allow terrible things to happen.

"Perhaps it's not God's fault; perhaps it's people's fault, due to sin," I suggested. I also acknowledged there was truth in Marty's critique of the church, and I apologized for the bad press we Christians have too often earned for God.

"So what's your story," we asked Mary. "Oh, I've got a lot of problems, you don't want to hear my story," she said. But I prodded her, and with amazing openness she shared that her parents are religious, which makes her feel pressured and leaves her confused, even though she respects and loves them. Mary also admitted she struggles with other issues, which we talked about briefly. "Marty told us where she is at with God," I ventured. "How about you?" I asked Mary. She said she is not sure whether or not God is real. I encouraged her to ask God, if he is real to show himself to her. "Keep asking him, and then be watching."

So there I sat, talking with Mary and Martha. Like another Martha long ago, the proof for her is in the actions. As a result of a perceived lack of action on the part of Christians, Marty rejects God. I pray she will recognize there are Christians in our town who really do care and who reach out to others in love. And like that other Mary from long ago, my new high school friend desperately wants to draw closer to God and sit at his feet. I'm hopeful she is going to take the God-challenge.

She candidly told me she felt churches here, maybe everywhere, tend to be exclusive, serving themselves rather than others.

I never did get to my computer work that afternoon. Instead, we had church there in a coffee shop.

Joe Sherer is interim lead pastor at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church and chair of the board of Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Dee Birkey

Fulfilling commitments

by Tammy Darling

Total commitment requires sacrifice, dedication, discipline and perseverance—things many people, even Christians, are unwilling to put forth.

God has uniquely designed each of us to make contributions to God's kingdom that requires making and fulfilling commitments. When we make a commitment, we have a responsibility to keep it, but that's not always easy.

In today's society, commitment is a word that isn't taken very seriously. But God takes it seriously. And the commitments we make in this world will only be as strong as our commitment to God.

How strong is your commitment to the Lord? Is it strong enough that you can endure suffering? Is it strong enough to ensure your part in carrying out the commission of Christ to make disciples of all the nations—no matter what comes against you?

Total commitment requires sacrifice, dedication, discipline and perseverance—things many people, even Christians, are unwilling to put forth.

When we make a commitment, we must understand that we're in it for the long haul. Unfortunately, many of us, myself included, often look for the easy way, the short cut, the smooth path. Instead, we need to be committed to whatever it takes to do the things God wants done.

There are many obstacles that can prevent us from completing the tasks set before us—if we let them. Some of those obstacles include:

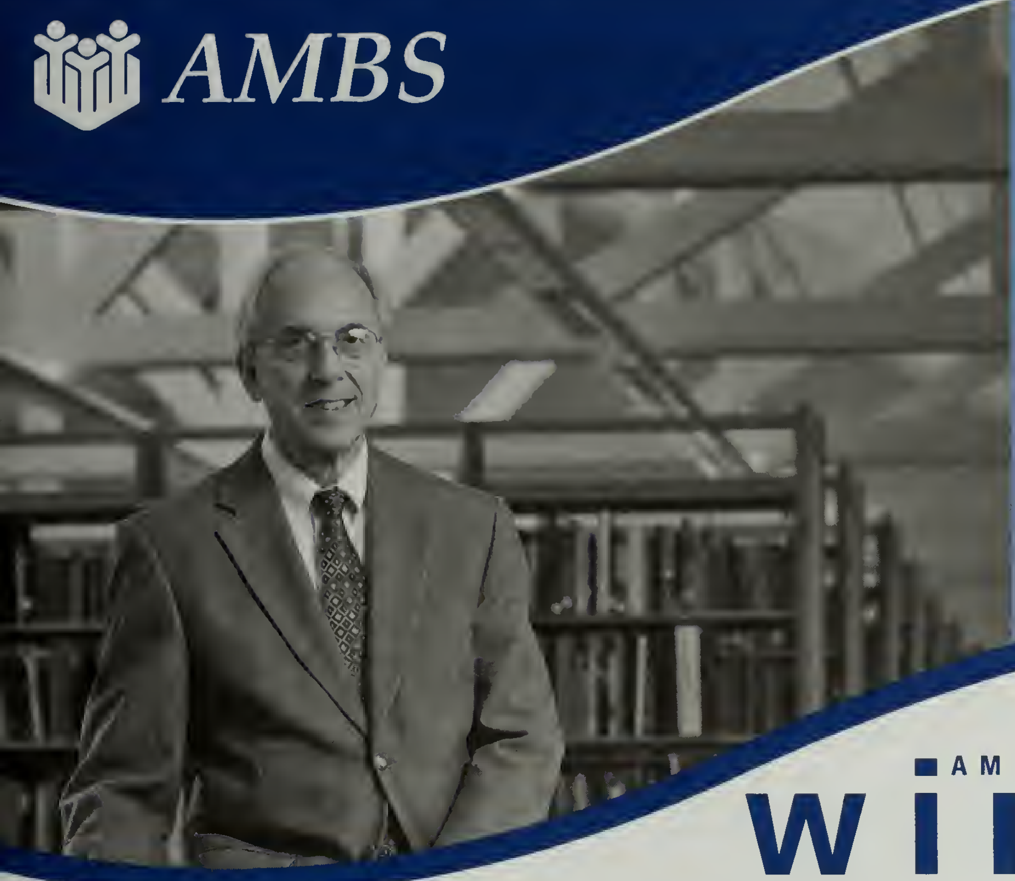
Busyness without clear vision and purpose. We can oftentimes become so intent on a frantic pace of doing that we bypass the real issues of life in Christ.

I once knew my walk-in closet needed a thorough cleaning out, but I was so overwhelmed by the enormity of it all that I didn't know what to do or where to begin. After I spent some time in prayer, God gave me a clear vision concerning cleaning out the "garbage" in my spiritual life as well as my physical closet—both included getting rid of anything that was unnecessary, unused or in excess. Once my purpose and vision was clear, the task took on new life, and I was able to continue even when the job seemed insurmountable.

Fear can also prevent us from persevering in our appointed tasks. Fear controlled Jonah as he ran from God. The events of the days following his time in the storm and in the belly of the fish were pure terror. Even in his eventual obedience he could not fully commit himself to God's plan and cause.

Fear has often been instrumental in my own lack of stepping out to do some things I know I should do. Because of fear, I would often avoid making a commitment at all. But sometimes we

AMBS



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Summer 2010
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AMBS window

Our seminaries need "conversion"

George R. Brunk III, Interim President

Serving as an interim president of a seminary in 2009–2010 has been an exciting experience. To a large extent that is attributable to the setting at AMBS where collegial relationships and general institutional health have been positive. But there is more.

This is a time of sea change in theological education in North America. Add to that the significant transitions within AMBS itself and in our denominations—Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. Depending on one's point of view, such a situation may or may not be "exciting."

I agree with Daniel Aleshire, executive director of the Association of Theological Schools, that, while we are traversing a time when future directions are especially unclear, it is a time of opportunity "to discern promising and faithful directions." He observes that "it is the kind of time that is a gift to missional leaders."

As an interim leader I have been in a role where I can participate in a conversation about the new directions; that has been exhilarating. My hope is that the conversation has built some momentum for future action.

AMBS stands in the middle of a generational shift in the teaching faculty. Nothing determines the actual direction of an educational institution more than its teachers/mentors/scholars. In turn, the effectiveness of the faculty is conditioned by the appropriateness of the curriculum within they must work. AMBS is currently involved in curriculum revision, seeking to find that elusive balance of academic, professional and spiritual formation so essential for leaders of God's people.

Some have described recent trends in North American seminaries as a movement from "academy" to "apostolate," that is, a shift from an emphasis on academic training to an emphasis on missional formation. This new emphasis recognizes that the church in the West needs to prepare leaders to witness to Christian faith in societies of non-faith and plural faiths.

Mennonite seminaries have had our own blend of intellectual, formational and practical preparation. However, we share, along with our denominational bodies, a sense of renewed call to mission. If our seminaries are to be active contributors to this missional vision, they will need some "conversion." This is not a theological conversion. Our tradition and current thinkers have given us a powerful theology of mission.

The need is for conversion at the personal and practical level. How do we create the context for such re-forming? Where does change begin? Does the seminary follow a conversion by the larger church or the reverse, or do we have complementary roles to play in turning the ship? What needs to open to allow the Spirit in? A central challenge for church and seminary is to find answers these questions. ●

Forty graduates honored at commencement

Forty graduates were honored at the AMBS commencement service on May 22, 2010. Thirty-one received the following degrees:

MDiv Master of Divinity
MAPS Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS Master of Arts: Theological Studies
MACF Master of Arts in Christian Formation

Nine received certificates as noted in the descriptions which follow.

Karen K. Andres *Certificate in Theological Studies* Will continue as associate pastor of Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan. Karen and David, her husband, have one child. She is a member of Tabor Mennonite Church and Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, Kan.

Raimonda Balciuniene *MDiv, pastoral care and counseling concentration* Will continue as a chaplain at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. She and Otonas Balciunas have three children. She is a member of Siauliai Free Christian Church in Lithuania and attends College Park Community Church in Indianapolis.

Jack Balgenorth *Certificate in Theological Studies* Will continue as pastor in the United Methodist Church in Jones, Mich. He and Anita, his wife, have three children. He is a member of Schoolcraft (Mich.) United Methodist Church.

Elaine Martin Blum *Certificate in theology and ethics* Pursuing an MA in philosophy at Kent State University. She is the daughter of Peter and Gail Blum of Hillsdale, Mich.

James Thomas "Tommy" Boutell *MDiv* Will continue as pastor of Olivet United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. He is married to Shelly Virva; they have three children.

David Gunnar Carlson *MDiv* Will take a discernment sabbatical following retirement from his pastorate at Grass Lake (Mich.) United Methodist Church. He and Normajean, his wife, have three adult children. He is a clergy member of West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Ruben Chupp *Certificate in Theological Studies* Will continue as pastor of North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind. He and Idella, his wife, have three adult children.

Raimonda Balciuniene, Elaine Blum, Gunnar Carlson, Ruben Chupp, Barbara Devereaux. Not pictured: Karen Andres, Jack Balgenorth

Barbara Devereaux *MDiv* Will do volunteer work on outreach projects with Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.

Oneida Dueñas *Certificate in Theological Studies, earned through Seminary Bíblico Anabautista* She is licensed in Western District Conference for special ministries and lives in Ferris, Texas.

Lori Ann Durbin *MDiv* Will do Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and anticipates pursuing chaplaincy work. She is a member of New Hope United Methodist Church, Elkhart.

Matt Eaton *MATS, theology and ethics concentration* Will pursue Ph.D. studies in theology with interest in the convergence of ecology and theology. Matt is married to Meridith Eaton and is a member of Keller Park Church, South Bend.

Eric Fink *Certificate in Theological Studies* Eric is married to Mary Honderich and they have one child. He is a member of the Grace Brethren Church.

At the May 21 Commissioning service, graduates and others leaving the seminary lit candles while the congregation sang a blessing. Participants included Eunjung Kim, Hatoko Inoue, Raimonda Balciuniene, Ginny Martin, Otonas Balciunas, Barbara Devereax, Rolando Sosa Granados and Joseph Vallejos.

Timothy S. Froese *MDiv* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He and Charlotte, his wife, have two children. He is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C.

Joanne K. Gallardo *MDiv* Will become assistant campus minister at Eastern Mennonite University and coordinate the ministries of Peace House in Harrisonburg, Va. She is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Lori Durbin, Matt Eaton, Eric Fink, Timothy Froese, Joanne Gallardo. Not pictured: Oneida Dueñas

2010 Graduates

Charles Geiser *MDiv* Pursuing a ministry or service assignment. He is married to Teresa Geiser and has two children. He is a member of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron, Ohio.

Sylvie Gudin Koehn *MACF, Christian spirituality concentration* Will provide spiritual direction and pursue opportunities for pastoral counseling. Sylvie is married to Brent Koehn and has two children. She is a member of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart.

Patricia Ann Haas *MDiv* Will continue as pastor at Pokagon United Methodist Church in Dowagiac, Mich., and continue the process of becoming an elder in the UMC. She is a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Lawton, Mich. She has three children.

Carmen Horst *MACF, Christian spirituality concentration* Will continue to offer spiritual guidance. She and Eric R. Kurtz, her husband, have one child. She is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Takanori Inoue *MATS, biblical studies concentration* He and Hatoko, his wife, will continue to serve at One Mission Society in Greenwood, Ind., then pursue further academic study. He is a member of Arai Holiness Church in Tokyo, Japan.

Franklin Jay Kandel *MDiv, pastoral care and counseling concentration* Will serve as interim pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis. He and Linda, his wife, have two children. He is a member of Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka, Ill.

Jacob Kloess *MAPS* Pursuing further study or work for a non-governmental organization or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Jacob is a member of Augustana Lutheran Church in Elkhart.

Gretchen Krause *MDiv, youth ministry concentration* Pursuing a ministry opportunity. She is a member of Bethel Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake, Minn.

Beth Miller Kraybill *MDiv, pastoral care and counseling concentration* Will begin a one-year full-time Clinical Pastoral Education residency in Seattle, Wash. She is married to Ken Kraybill and they have two adult children. She is a member of Seattle Mennonite Church.

Samantha E. Lioi *MDiv, theological studies concentration* Will serve at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen during the summer, then explore opportunities for ministry.

Virginia Martin *MACF, teaching ministry concentration* Will continue as development associate at AMBS. She and Armand, her husband, have two children. She is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen.

Samuel Moran *Certificate in Theological Studies, earned through Seminario Bíblico Anabautista* Serves as pastor of Ministerios Restauracion, Portland, Ore.

Kelbessa Muleta Demena *MDiv, pastoral care and counseling concentration* Will work in the Meserete Kristos Church and teach at the MKC college in Ethiopia. Kelbessa is married to Aster Mamo and they have two children.

(Continued on page 6)

Charles Geiser, Sylvie Gudin Koehn, Franklin Kandel, Takanori Inoue. Not pictured: Patricia Haas, Carmen Horst, Jacob Kloess.

Commencement address refocuses *Anabaptist Vision*

In the commencement address, C. Arnold Snyder, professor of history at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., suggested that the *Anabaptist Vision*, set forth in H. S. Bender's classic essay in 1944, must be significantly refocused.

Bender's essay proposed three key characteristics of Anabaptism: the essence of Christianity is discipleship, the church is to be a fellowship of believers, and believers are marked by new ethic of love and nonresistance.

Snyder pointed out, however, that this kind of living requires a spiritual rebirth and "calls for the continued gift of God's grace."

Snyder noted that Bender himself, in an article published in 1961, said, "A life of discipleship is one in which the Holy Spirit works with power."

Snyder continued, "This cannot be accomplished without prayer, meditation on Scripture and cultivation of our relationship with the Vine." ●

C. Arnold Snyder, professor of history at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., noted that H.S. Bender's classic *Anabaptist Vision* was not Anabaptist enough. A life of discipleship, being committed to other believers and caring for others requires a spiritual rebirth and "calls for the continued gift of God's grace," he said.

Gretchen Krause, Beth Miller Kraybill, Samantha Lioi, Ginny Martin, Kelbessa Muleta Demena. Not pictured: Samuel Moran.

2010 Graduates

John C. Murray *MATS, theology and ethics concentration* Will continue as lead pastor of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church. He and Krista, his wife, have three children.

Cara Pfeiffer *MATS, biblical studies concentration* Pursuing international service or further postgraduate studies after summer work at Camp Friedenswald near Cassopolis, Mich. She is married to Joe Pfeiffer, also a 2010 graduate, and they attend Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Joseph Pfeiffer *MATS, church history concentration* Will continue work at Camp Friedenswald near Cassopolis Mich., through the summer, then pursue international service or further postgraduate studies. He is married to Cara Pfeiffer, also a 2010 graduate, and is a member of First Friends Church of Mansfield, Mansfield, Ohio.

Jesse Smith *MDiv* Will pursue vocational and educational opportunities while Anne Penner, his wife, will be in medical residency in Pittsburgh, Pa. He is a member of First Mennonite Church of Iowa City, Iowa.

Rolando A. Sosa Granados *MDiv combined with a Master of Social Work from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich. in a dual-degree program* Will pursue a bivocational pastoral assignment. He is married to Agustina Sosa, and they have five children. He is a member of Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen.

Joseph Telgren *MDiv, theological studies concentration* Will pursue a pastoral ministry assignment. He is a member of Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

Matthew Tschetter *MAPS, international development administration concentration* Will study and serve as a graduate research assistant at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich., to pursue a degree in community and international development. He is married to Heidi A. Rupley. He is a member of Hively Avenue Mennonite Church and attends Fellowship of Hope in Elkhart.

Joseph Vallejos *MAPS combined with the Master of Social Work from Andrews University in a dual-degree program* Will continue as a bilingual therapist at Family and Children's Center in Elkhart. Joseph and Claudia Gallardo, his wife, have two children. He is a member of Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor in Goshen.

Jason P. Vance *MDiv, theological studies concentration* Will be employed at Habitat for Humanity of Michigan and serve on the leadership team at Delta Community Christian Church in Lansing, Mich. He is married to Rhoda K. Vance.

Blanca Vargas *Certificate in Theological Studies, earned through Seminario Bíblico Anabautista* Serves as pastor of Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida, San Antonio, Texas. Blanca is married to Victor Serafin Vargas, who also serves as pastor for the congregation.

Cara Pfeiffer, Joseph Pfeiffer, Jesse Smith, Rolando Sosa Granados. Not pictured: John Murray, Joseph Telgren.

Robin Walton *MACF, Christian spirituality concentration* Will continue managing the pastoral care department at Doctors Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. She and Greg, her husband, have three children. She is a member of Columbus Mennonite Church.

Susan Headrick Wheeler *MDiv, pastoral care and counseling concentration* Pursuing pastoral care and counseling work in a congregational setting. She and Lee, her husband, have three children. She is a member of Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Andrew Zolman *Certificate in Theological Studies* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He is married to Tara Zolman and he attends Siloam Community Church, Goshen. ●

Matt Eaton received the award for excellence in theological studies from Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology and ethics, at the Dean's Breakfast, the morning before commencement. Other seniors honored were Robin Weldon Walton (Christian formation), Rolando Sosa Granados and Tommy Boutell (practical theology), Raimonda Balciuniene and Beth Miller Kraybill (pastoral care and counseling), Cara Pfeiffer (New Testament interpretation), Samantha Lioi (Hebrew exegesis) and Joseph Pfeiffer (church history).

Matthew Tschetter, Joseph Vallejos, Jason Vance, Robin Walton. Not pictured: Blanca Vargas, Susan Wheeler, Andrew Zolman.

AMBS

alumni news

Peter Wiebe (Bachelor of Divinity 1952, Master of Divinity 1982) received the 2010 AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award. He is recognized for a lifetime of ministry, including serving four congregations and serving as interim administrator for two Mennonite schools. Currently he chairs the Joining Together, Investing in Hope campaign to raise funds for the new Mennonite Church USA offices.

Andy Alexis-Baker (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 2007) and **David B. Miller** (Master of Divinity 1993, current faculty) wrote articles in *Peace Be With You: Christ's Benediction amid Violent Empires* (Cascadia 2010).

Hongtau Yin (student 1999–2002) was recently ordained for ministry with Mennonite Partners in China, a partner ministry of Mennonite Church Canada.

Chaiya Hadtasunsern (Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism 2002) was ordained as pastor of Hickory (N.C.) Hmong Mennonite Church on Feb. 21.

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panorama

Leroy Saner (right) retired in June after 16 years as a development officer for AMBS. Winifred, his wife (left), also served at AMBS for a number of years as housing assistant. They joined in celebrating with Hatoko and 2010 graduate Takanori Inoue. Leroy, who also spent 28 years at Freeman (S.D.) Junior College and Freeman Academy, said, "It is rewarding to see lives changed at all levels—high school to seminary."

New online calendar

Stay in touch with what is happening at AMBS with the new online calendar: **www.ambs.edu/calendars/events.** You can "subscribe" to the calendar to get notices as items are added and updated.

Meet 2010 !Explore participants

Visit **www.ambs.edu/programs-institutes/explore/2010-participants** to meet this year's participants and event pastors in **!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth.** They will join in the !Explore group experience from July 5 to 20.

Online tours of AMBS

Tour the AMBS library and chapel with student hosts on the AMBS YouTube channel: **www.youtube.com/mennoniteseminary** ●

Summer 2010
Volume 20 Issue 3

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

your gifts at work

AMBS student **Jason Vance** and professor **David B. Miller** participated in the **Truth Commission on Conscience in War** in March 21 in New York City. Veterans, military chaplains, religious leaders and legal experts grappled with issues of religious conscience objection for people in military service. At a later forum at AMBS, Jason reported on his experience of being released from military service when he became a conscientious objector to war.

Full-tuition scholarships have been awarded to two incoming students: Caitlin Desjardins, member of Madison (Wisc.) Mennonite Church; and Caleb Yoder, member of West Union Mennonite Church, Wellman, Iowa.

Improvement of AMBS apartments is continuing with the summer goal of reroofing the two-story buildings.

Your contributions to AMBS make possible these learning activities and support of students. ●

Our commitments to God need to be realistic.

just have to take a leap of faith and leave the results up to God. I am learning to do it, afraid if that's what it takes.

Spiritual coldness may also squelch our fire to start or finish specific tasks. The coldness may creep in so subtly that we don't recognize it until we're way off course.

A lack of desire for God and his Word results in a lack of desire to obey and serve God. We become spiritually insensitive—paralyzed from keeping previous commitments and prevented from making others.

Ungodly influence can affect how we think and act in our Christian life. "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm" (Proverbs 13:20). Even some Christians may try to convince us that being lukewarm is acceptable.

As we seek to fulfill our commitments, it's important to find people who challenge our spiritual walk as "iron sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17 KJV). Strong fellow Christians will enable us to finish the various tasks we need to do.

Laziness will likewise keep us from fulfilling commitments. Physical and spiritual laziness robs us of vitality. I know that when I was at my unhealthiest physically, I was unable to complete certain tasks or even start others due to my being "unfit" for kingdom work.

Of course, laziness isn't always just referring to physical health. Often it expresses itself by filling our time with worldly or selfish pursuits such as excessive television viewing, hobbies, sports, or materialism. Satan will tempt us to do anything—or nothing at all—just to keep us from completing God's will.

When we commit to something, it's important that we first count the cost. There's nothing worse than making a commitment we can't keep because we discover after the fact that we just didn't have the necessary resources to fulfill the commitment. Counting the cost before we commit will enable us to fulfill the commitments we do choose to take on and bring glory to God in the process.

Before committing, take inventory of your spiritual reserves as well. Frequent times of prayer, Bible study and reflection are essential if we are to fulfill our commitments. Even Jesus made sure his spiritual reservoir was replenished. He dealt with abundant needs, yet he protected his time alone with his Father. We should never take on so many commitments that we don't have time to nourish our relationship with the Lord.

To honor our commitments, we must first honor our limits. The question is not whether we will draw the line, but where we will draw the line. As we accept the reality of our limitations, we find we don't have to respond to every need or accept every invitation.

Counting the cost before we commit will enable us to fulfill the commitments we do choose to take on and bring glory to God in the process.

If you find yourself faced with a commitment that you're unable to fulfill, be honest about it. Ask for help. Admit you failed to count the cost or ran into unforeseen circumstances and be honest about your needs. State specifically what it would take for the commitment to be brought to completion.

Sometimes when commitments are ongoing it can be hard to continue with the same enthusiasm we started out with. Even my two oldest children have discovered this. Each year as we count down the last dozen or so days of our homeschool year, my kids' work tends to get sloppier and more incomplete. They just want to be finished. It's a struggle—but a worthwhile one—to get them to finish as strong as they started. Scripture encourages us to run the race in such a way as to receive the prize (see 1 Corinthians 9:25). We can pray and ask God to replace our lost motivation with a new fervor to fulfill the commitments we have made.

Paul put a high premium on stick-to-itiveness. He wasn't big on those with a lack of commitment (see 2 Timothy 4:10, 16). Paul knew the value of total commitment and encouraged others, such as Timothy, not to be quitters. Paul knew that only the truly committed are truly effective.

As we first count the cost before committing and practice discernment when choosing our commitments, we can be assured that those things we commit to are truly God's will for us at this time. Then, as we rely on the Holy Spirit, we can be sure we will have the strength, time and resources to fulfill those commitments.

Tammy Darling lives in Three Springs, Pa.

The courage to lead

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht is a member of Laurel Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., and a member of the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA.

I am serving on Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board. As a board we are called to listen to our constituency and make wise decisions for the larger church body, which is no small task. This body is not a homogeneous one; it has diverse opinions on sexuality, political involvement and even whether we should hold our 2013 convention in Phoenix. Yet I care for this body and believe that as a board we have an important mandate to accomplish.

One of our board's guiding principles for 2009-11—to support our vision of healing and hope— is "to listen well and lead with courage." As we are confronted with many hard issues, it becomes mandatory for us to learn to lead with courage.

In this time of many changes, you have entrusted us as board members to take the lead, and we wish to do so with courage—not foolish courage but Spirit-led courage.

This type of talk makes some Mennonites feel nervous; it is not passive language, and I have observed a tendency among ethnic Mennonites to feel tension around "having or exercising power." However, there are increasingly more "Mennonites by choice" who are leaders in the church and do not fear the concept of exercising power.

We do not want to abuse our power, yet as board members we cannot avoid our mandate to make decisions. When consultant David Brubaker of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., who has studied change and conflict in religious organizations, gave a presentation to the board in February, he encouraged us to learn to stay at the center and hold all the parts together without falling into any of the extremes. Is that what it means to lead with courage?

Ever since I was appointed to serve on this board a year ago, I have played with a metaphor that from my perspective illustrates the dynamics between board members/leaders, staff/leaders and general church leaders: the Amish horse and buggy. It is a simple illustration of the interdependence of power among the parts.

For me, the driver of the buggy represents the board members, the horsepower moving the buggy represents the staff, and the buggy represents the church. The buggy holds our precious belief systems, our congregations and their leaders.

In our biennial assemblies, the church appoints board members representing various perspectives—race, gender, rural/urban, pastoral, business/corporate, conference, among others—to lead in offering directions on key issues that affect the whole church.

The leaders/staff on the national/conference level enable the buggy to move, to go places. We need to listen carefully to the occupants of the buggy—the church—to hear where they want us to go as well. I acknowledge that this is a simplistic way of viewing the complexity of the church and the power dynamic; this is just an image, not without its faults and limitations.

In this time of many changes, you have entrusted us as board members to take the lead, and we wish to do so with courage—not foolish courage but Spirit-led courage.

I am reminded of Ezra and Nehemiah being called to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and of the people of Israel losing their identity in the exile period. The Israelites had assimilated the cultures around them and needed redirection. It took not one but two strong leaders to have the courage to lead. They succeeded because they exercised the will of God.

I pray that as board members and humble leaders of Mennonite Church USA, we can listen carefully and not be afraid to lead with courage. On occasions we will be criticized for decisions we make, but I hope we can set the correct direction. Can you trust us? After all, this is our church, and we are all part of the buggy/body of Christ. TM

Being somebody

I believe in the power and beauty and wonder of diversity. I believe our faith calls different people together in order to be a brand new people. I also believe this coming together is radically more powerful when we are grounded in the places and the people we come from. These places and people matter.

This year marks 47 years since Martin Luther King Jr. spoke from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. This march was for jobs and freedom, for justice, and the speech drew upon and echoed the words of the biblical prophets. The speech encompassed all kinds of people while being grounded in a specific tradition. It was a way of affirming the "somebodyness" of African American people.

King used this word—somebodyness—to express the worth and dignity of an individual, combined with the agency through which a person can make things happen. Our "somebodyness" is derived in part from those who look like us, talk like us and come from where we have come from. They give us anchors, places in which to secure ourselves. But we don't need to stay anchored. We can venture out and work with others who don't look or think like us but are committed to the same values and want to create a peaceful and just future for all.

I have been collecting stories of African American women and their journeys as Christians who strongly identify with a biblical call to justice. Part of what I wanted to hear from these women is how they sustain themselves for the long haul—what keeps them grounded, what keeps them going. One woman works with a multiracial, multiethnic peace group that offers space for people to explore being community and learning together to follow Jesus in ways that seem unorthodox to "mainstream" Christianity. Here she meets people who may disagree but who are committed to a way of life. It is not a space to retreat from the pains and struggles of life outside that space or be a sheltering bubble. It is a space that gives life and energy for the activities that take place outside that space.

Another woman has committed herself to helping shape culturally appropriate worship and church life by producing worship materials for the life of the black church, including a hymnal project that includes hymns by African American composers and worship resources that tell the story of black Christianity.

In such stories I identity several ways these women have been empowered to work across boundaries of difference. Each woman has developed a way to ground her activities from the center of her own cultural identities and giftedness. Each spoke of being nurtured in identities affirmed and appreciated in their communities, even if not in the broader society.

One woman speaks of taking the opportunity every Sunday to teach black history through acts of worship and liturgy. Another dispersed community regularly shares information about their individual experiences but also reflects corporately on articles, books and sermons in online forums. Once a year, a face-to-face gathering incorporates community building, worship and education on such issues as sustainable farming, consensus training and why the prison industrial complex is an issue for peacemakers.

Both women speak of a sense of belonging and a system of accountability. A community, or a network of communities, has been essential to sustaining them for the long haul, for adapting their passions as a way of life. While having relationships with those who share racial/cultural backgrounds is important, authentic cross-racial/cultural relationships are also important. And while having a shared commitment to working for peace is important, authentic relationships are built upon more than this. Being intentional about knowing each other as fully rounded human beings matters. This means part of the "work" is play—cooking and eating together, watching movies, going to events, bringing families together, just hanging out. In the midst of this, the work continues—the development of a common language to talk about injustice, building resources and skills, confronting those who misuse power, and working to create new institutional structures built upon the dignity—the somebodyness—of all people.

Being intentional about relationships that cross differences means that hard conversations happen. This is where many coalitions break down. People who have no other commitment to each other except for the "work" can easily walk away. We need to carve out spaces where we can be our authentic selves with one another. TM

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Being intentional about relationships that cross differences means that hard conversations happen.

Why MC USA must officially boycott Arizona

Felipe Hinojosa is an assistant professor of history at Texas A&M University and attends Houston Mennonite Church.

Hugo Saucedo is a member of San Antonio Mennonite Church.

Quiero recordarle al gringo, yo no cruce la frontera, la frontera me cruzo, America nacio libre, el hombre la dividio ... es un eror bien marcado, nos quitaron ocho estados, ¿quien es aqui el invasor?

I'd like to remind the white man, I did not cross the border, the border crossed me, America was born free, but man divided her ... it is a grave injustice, they took from us eight states, who then is the invader?—Los Tigres del Norte

One of our favorite songs by the popular band Los Tigres del Norte, a norteño conjunto, highlights the complex, interconnected histories of Mexico and the United States. Within that history of war, colonialism, capitalists exploiting natural resources, railroads, immigration and Protestant missionaries, is a memory of the geography that is now the Southwest, or "el México de afuera." This was once Mexico. It was once Indigenous land. The dual colonial projects of the Spanish and Euroamericans, whether an assimilation program or a reservation system, has left a legacy and a memory of what once was and what was unjustly taken. And while the colonial projects most affected Indigenous and poor Mexican communities, even wealthy Mexicanos quickly learned that money did not necessarily whiten in the Southwest. As the nation moved West and defined the "American" character through uneven ideas about race, to be Indian and to be Mexican meant to be nonwhite, non-Christian and a problem to be subdued.

The song by Los Tigres del Norte resonates with so many in the Southwest because it captures the frustrations and sentiments of many Mexicans and Mexican Americans who have lived here for generations. The song reminds everyone, especially those with anti-immigrant sentiments, that Mexicanas/os come here to work, provide for their families and live out the supposed American dream. If Mexican immigration is an invasion to reclaim the Southwest territories for Mexico, to criminalize your youth, make you sick with Mexican diseases or grease up the streets with taquerias, as some folks believe, then we are here to tell you that we never got that memo.

The new law in Arizona, SB1070, which gives power to law enforcement to question folks they deem "reasonably suspicious" will no doubt lead to racial profiling and heighten the already tense relationship between police officers and the Latina/o community. But while it is easy to blame this on a wave of racist nonsense consuming our nation these days, this is part of a larger historical trend that has plagued this part of the country for over a century. From the "case of the 40 blonde babies" (see Linda Gordon's *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*) to repatriation campaigns that blamed the Great Depression on Mexican immigrants in the 1930s to multiple federal projects, such as Operation Wetback in 1954 and Operation Gatekeeper in 1990s, Arizona has been on the frontlines of defining the boundaries of race, the nation and national identity. Operation Gatekeeper in the 1990s actually made matters worse by funneling immigrants to the most dangerous crossing paths in the Arizona desert. Months before the attacks on the World Trade Center, 14 Mexican immigrants died in the desert in what became an all-too-familiar scene for many immigrant rights workers in Arizona. As we think about our collective response to SB1070, it is imperative we understand how a long history of colonialism and racism has contributed to minutemen projects and beefed-up border security, all in the name of "defending the nation."

We write this and provide this history in order to call on Mennonite Church USA to officially boycott the state of Arizona. This means rethinking the plan to have our church convention in Phoenix in 2013. We understand this is not an easy decision for our church leadership, especially since cancelling our commitment in Phoenix may come with steep financial penalties. But we believe the financial hit we might take is not money lost but an investment in our integrity as a people of God. We must remember that being disciples of Jesus means not only taking risks and facing persecution but exposing systems of oppression that dehumanize us and remove us from God. In other words, we are God's people, a people of dignity, who must be ready to stand in solidarity with one another.

In the case of Arizona, we believe that solidarity means fully supporting the call by Arizona churches and Iglesia Menonita Hispana to cancel our convention commitment for Phoenix 2013. Let's cancel everything. If delegates must meet, they can organize separate sessions, but let's have no youth convention in 2013. Let's call it a sabbatical. This is radical and it will cause us

(Continued on page 44)

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MC USA to send delegation to Arizona

Leaders will gather information to help with decision about 2013 convention.

A delegation projected to include more than 15 Mennonite Church USA leaders will visit Arizona Aug. 12-13 to witness "on the ground" the effects of the state's new immigration law SB1070. Glen Guyton, associate executive director of constituent resources, along with Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning, is preparing the agenda for the delegation (see box for a list of invitees).

Glen Guyton

"The group will meet with city officials, convention planners, local Hispanic and Mennonite Church USA churches, and human rights workers who specialize in immigration," said a release from Guyton on July 7. "They will gather information about the multifaceted impact of the current location for our 2013 gathering and develop options for either staying in Phoenix or finding a different site."

The group will meet with the Mennonite churches in the Phoenix area, although there are few Hispanic Mennonites in that area, Guyton said on July 1.

"As our church seeks to become antiracist, the dominant group must have accountability to the racial/ethnic constituency in the decision-making process," said Guyton. "This delegation will model that."

Also according to Guyton's release: "Because the decision to change the location could be delayed until April 2011 without further penalties, the [Mennonite Church USA Executive] Board may choose to wait until that time to make a final decision on the matter."

In an earlier letter, dated June 21 and first published in the Spanish language e-zine *Meno Acontecer* (Mennonite Happenings), executive director Ervin Stutzman cited Guyton's plans for the process:

1. Exposure to all in Mennonite Church USA: "We believe the issue of immigration is far greater than the location of our 2013 churchwide convention. ... Deciding a convention location will expose the broader church to the negative effects of current U.S. immigration policy and the proposed Arizona law, which many feel will lead to racial profiling."
2. Discussion and discernment: "A gathering called the Leaders Forum had already been planned for September, and now the 2013 convention location will be a central topic of discussion and discernment. ... It is important that we understand 'why' when the final decision is announced."
3. Contracts: "The 2013 convention is over three years away. Making an announcement now will not benefit our Hispanic community any more than making an announcement in early 2011. ... There is not just one contract to cancel but multiple contracts that would need to be changed. The liquidated damages of cancelling these contracts could possibly exceed $500,000. In addition, at least 10 other states are considering legislation similar to Arizona's. In some ways, announcing a decision too early is reckless. It is not as simple as picking another city."
4. City of Phoenix: "The city of Phoenix is paying attention to Mennonite Church USA. ... The city of Phoenix and its large Hispanic population have great disdain for SB1070."

"As an African-American," Guyton also said, "I am no stranger to discrimination. I empathize with my Hispanic brothers and sisters and cannot imagine what it feels like to live in fear of being deported from the country I love and call my home. I hope that everyone in the church understands that the pain and fear felt by our Hispanic constituency will not end with the decision of where we hold our 2013 churchwide convention."

Executive director of Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) Yvonne Diaz said IMH opposes the convention in Phoenix and requests a new location.

"We never considered Phoenix a safe place for a convention," she said on July 2. "The anti-immigration sentiment has existed in Arizona for a long time; this is nothing new. For Iglesia Menonita Hispana, our question is: How amid this whole situation is Mennonite Church USA demonstrating its solidarity with IMH?"

Diaz said she would prefer another city in the Southwest, such as Dallas, Albuquerque or San Antonio for Convention 2013. She is a member of the delegation and said she hopes the Anglo participants in the delegation will take initiative at the Leaders Forum, to be held Sept. 23-25 in Pittsburgh, to share what they witnessed from meeting with Latinos and Latino faith leaders in Arizona.—*Anna Groff*

Projected delegation participants*:

Executive Board members: Dick Thomas, Tina Begay, Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, Juanita Nuñez and Charlotte Hardt
National conference staff: Ervin Stutzman, Glen Guyton, Marty Lehman and Rachel Swartzendruber Miller
Iglesia Menonita Hispana representatives: Juan Montes, Madeline Maldonado, Jesus Munoz and Yvonne Diaz
Intercultural Relations Reference Committee members: Leslie Francisco III and Kuaying Teng
Racial Healing Task Group member: Lloyd Miller
Others: Felipe Hinojosa, Marc Hershberger and Susan Mark Landis

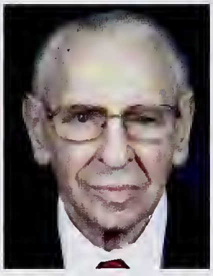
*These individuals were invited on July 7 to join the delegation.

J. Lawrence Burkholder leaves legacy

Thought Christians and non-Christians alike were to be world citizens

Goshen (Ind.) College President Emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder, 92, passed away early on June 24 at the Greencroft Healthcare Center in Goshen.

He was born on Oct. 31, 1917, in Newville, Pa. Upon graduating from Goshen College in 1939, Burkholder married Harriet Lapp, with whom he had four children. In 1942, after receiving his bachelor of divinity degree from Lutheran Seminary (Gettysburg, Pa.), Burkholder served as pastor of Croghan Mennonite Church in New York. He earned his master of theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1951 and his doctor of theology degree summa cum laude from Princeton in 1958. In 1944, he volunteered to be an administrator of a relief program in India, serving as a representative for Mennonite Board of Missions. He then went on to serve in China until 1948, where he acted as associate director of Church World Services with Mennonite Central Committee, directed the activities of the National Clearing Committee and flew DC-3s over the Himalayas to deliver supplies to Chinese refugees. In 1949, Burkholder became a professor in Goshen's Bible, religion and philosophy department. In 1961, Burkholder was called to serve as a professor at Harvard Divinity School. At Harvard, he was named chair of the Department of the Church and was the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity. In 1971, he returned to Goshen College to serve as its 11th president.



Burkholder had a way of being present for many of the 20th century's major global moments. He and his family lived around the corner from Albert Einstein while studying at Princeton. He gave the opening eulogy and prayer at Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral ceremony at Harvard University. He was in Moscow's Red Square during the failed coup against Boris Yeltsin. He was in East Germany when the Berlin Wall fell. He was in China, again, shortly after the democracy movement was crushed in Tiananmen Square.

Goshen College President James E. Brenneman says: "He made this campus a more beautiful and welcoming place by planting trees. He nurtured closer 'town-and-gown' relationships. He helped put the college on sound financial footing. He also showed us that all Christians—Mennonites and others—could be people of strong faith making a difference in the civic, business, political and institutional establishments of the world. President Burkholder felt that Christians and non-Christians alike were to be world citizens."—*Jennifer Steiner and Jodi H. Beyeler*

Tim Blaum

Janet Friesen, daughter of President Emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder, offers a remembrance of her father during a memorial service on June 30 at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

Friends and family bid farewell

Family and friends praised President Emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder as a visionary leader with an enduring love for the church, his family and scholarship during his memorial service June 30. After his burial in the morning at Elkhart Prairie Cemetery in Goshen, Ind., about 350 people gathered at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, for a memorial service led by Pastor of Fellowship Rosemary Widmer. Former Goshen College Provost John A. Lapp, who delivered the eulogy, described Burkholder's many contributions. Goshen College President James E. Brenneman offered a remembrance in which he noted the coincidence of Burkholder, whom he described as a "mighty oak," dying the very evening a tornado touched down in Goshen and toppled giant oak trees across Eighth Street. Brenneman said he appreciated visiting with Burkholder. He said Burkholder also challenged him to more fully realize the college's vision as an intercultural and international learning community. President Emeritus Vic Stoltzfus, who succeeded Burkholder as president, offered a meditation on the grace of God—a subject Burkholder had requested that he address.
— *Richard R. Aguirre of Goshen College*

Bethel College names new president

Perry D. White was administrator at Catholic and Presbyterian colleges.

Perry D. White, Manitowoc, Wis., has been named the 14th president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He and wife, Dalene White, were to move to North Newton, with his first day anticipated to be in mid-July.

White was vice president for external relations and admissions at Silver Lake College in Manitowoc—a college founded on the Catholic Franciscan tradition. Before coming to Silver Lake College in 2008, White was vice president for college advancement at Monmouth (Ill.) College—affiliated with the Presbyterian church.

White has a "lifelong commitment to faith-based private college education," says Melvin Goering, Santa Fe, N.M., Bethel board chair.

White has a bachelor of arts degree in music education from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. White earned a master of music degree in choral conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a doctorate of musical arts in choral conducting from the University of Oklahoma.

Between 1983 and 1998, White taught vocal music at the middle school, high school and college levels in Iowa, Missouri and Texas. He went to Monmouth College in 1998 as a professor of music and in 2004 was tapped for the broader administrative role of vice president for college advancement.

"Dalene and I are truly honored and humbled by this opportunity to serve Bethel College," White says. "During our visit to campus, we were so impressed by the people, programs and unwavering commitment to quality higher education that is deeply rooted in the heritage and values of the Mennonite tradition."

In addition to White's professional endeavors, he has taken an active role within his community. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Chestnut Fine Arts Center in Olathe, Kan., and the Mainly Manitowoc Downtown Business Association. He has been involved with the Manitowoc County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program and is the past president of the Warren County YMCA in Monmouth, Ill.

"White has shown successful leadership in two important areas, recruitment and advancement," says Goering. "At Monmouth College, he recruited and built a large, strong choral program—from a small group to four choirs, including the nationally recognized Monmouth College Chorale.

"At both Monmouth and Silver Lake, he led a broader institutional recruitment strategy and process, with significant growth in both cases. He was part of the strategic group activity that led to 40 percent enrollment growth at Monmouth. He also led substantial successful fund-raising campaigns at both schools. Monmouth surpassed its campaign goal of $48 million, securing $62 million.

"Within his first two years as vice president for college advancement at Silver Lake, Dr. White reorganized and energized an advancement team, resulting in a 30 percent increase in total dollars raised and 38 percent increase in donors to the institution."

White does not come from an Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition.

"He sees himself as a part of the broader Anabaptist tradition," Goering says, "as evidenced by his own adult believer's baptism, with a special appreciation for the value of service to others. He can bring a fresh understanding of Mennonite heritage and values and has the skill to speak in language that interprets the tradition to those from outside it in ways that will be inviting and bridge-building.

"White has demonstrated an ability to understand, appreciate and articulate the history, heritage and core values of diverse institutions in a way that is authentic to loyal supporters," Goering says. "White has shown an unusual capacity to work with and appreciate people of diverse religious backgrounds at a time when Bethel's student population is becoming more diverse."

Jim Rosenberger, Mennonite Education Agency board chair, says, "The MEA board appreciated the opportunity to consult with the search committee and provide feedback to the selection process, and with the announcement of Dr. White we want to offer our blessings on this new beginning. We welcome Dr. Perry White into dialogue with MEA board and staff as he begins his tenure as president of the oldest Mennonite higher education institution."

Dalene White, who has Kansas roots and a degree from the University of Kansas, has had successful roles in advancement and marketing at Monmouth and Silver Lake, following a career in the corporate world as a CPA for a large firm. She is "an enthusiastic supporter and spokesperson for the values of the church-related, faith-based college," Goering says.—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*

More than 200 people gather for ground blessing

$10.4 million raised during economic recession, construction began June 16.

Ryan Miller

Work in Progress Gospel Band singers, from left, Rebeka Moeljono, Grace Eidmann, Sandy Miller, Ann Jacobs and Lefuarn Harvey (all employees of Mennonite Mission Network), sing at the ground blessing ceremony for the new Mennonite Church USA office building.

On June 15, approximately 200 people gathered on the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) campus in Elkhart, Ind., to bless the ground that is to be the site for the denomination's new office building. The energy-efficient building, which will be located adjacent to the campus, will house offices for staff of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mission Network and other organizations.

"Elkhart has always been a city of innovation, generosity and resourcefulness," said Dick Moore, mayor of Elkhart, during the ceremony, "and I trust that these attributes will provide a firm foundation as you share the message of reconciliation and service with others across the street and around the world."

Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, welcomed participants to the event—part of the "Joining Together, Investing in Hope" campaign—and spoke about how the decision was made to maintain denominational offices in Newton, Kan., and Elkhart, Ind., along with dispersed staff in other parts of the country.

"We believe that a new facility will enable us to strengthen our mission while practicing sound stewardship," Stutzman said, noting that savings from the building will allow for additional funds to be redirected to the ministries of Mennonite Mission Network and other agencies of Mennonite Church USA. "We also hope this location will help create synergies across the church by being located near the AMBS community."

During the ceremony, Stutzman expressed gratitude to the donors, who were able to give a total of $10.4 million during a time of economic hardships. Of the total amount raised, $5.8 million will help benefit and strengthen existing ministry programs, with a majority of that going to Mission Network. The other $4.6 million will go toward the $7.2 million total building cost.

The program included the symbolic planting of a tree on the AMBS campus. To break the ground, Wilbur Bontrager, campaign vice chair, used a hoe that had belonged to Christian Zook Yoder, former president of Mennonite Board of Missions, to represent the pioneers of the faith "who have helped us get to where we are today." Cora Brown, pastor of Church Without Walls in Elkhart, watered the tree, symbolizing the water of the Spirit blessing the new building.

Others offering greetings and affirmations of the building project at the ceremony included George Brunk, interim president of AMBS; Lois Johns Kaufmann, conference minister of Central District Conference; and Dan Miller, lead conference minister of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Prayers were given by Carlos Romero, executive director of Mennonite Education Agency, and Bill Hochstetler, chair of Mennonite Mission Network's Board of Directors.

Stutzman also invited Hilary Scarsella of Spark Renewal, a group that has been expressing concerns about the decision-making processes regarding the building project, to speak during the event.

"We stand here today, not in an effort to spoil the celebration but because we believe that the body of Christ can hold the tension of divergent views, even if institutions must make choices that cannot hold the tension of divergent views," Scarsella said.

Stutzman responded to concerns from Spark Renewal that the campaign did not fully engage as many representatives from racial/ethnic groups in decision-making processes as was desired. He noted that the denomination's Executive Board has decided to give a 10 percent tithe of any new funds donated to the building project to various racial/ethnic ministries and needs.

The site contractor, DJ Construction, began work on the new building on June 16. DJ Construction is headquartered in Goshen, Ind., with a second location in Warsaw, Ind.—*Jessica Herschberger and Annette Brill Bergstresser of Mennonite Church USA*

'Martyrs Mirror' marks 350th anniversary

At 1,500 pages, it was largest book published in colonial America.

Martyrs Mirror is newer than the Bible and longer than some copies of it.

Like the Bible, though, the book has a powerful message for today, says James Lowry, a Mennonite historian from Hagerstown, Md.

"Persecution, dungeons, shackles, chains are not something in our experience," Lowry told an audience at a June 8-10 conference, "Martyrs Mirror: Reflections Across Time," at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.

Yet we live in a materialistic age, as Dutch Mennonites did in 1660, when Thieleman van Braght revised and added to previous books and records about Christian martyrs, aiming to spark spiritual renewal, Lowry said.

"The *Martyrs Mirror* is the correct medicine for 21st-century Christians, and especially for Mennonites," Lowry said.

More than 60 people from across the spectrum of Anabaptist-connected groups as well as scholars from other traditions gathered at the event, which marked the 350th anniversary of the 1660 edition, called *The Bloody Theater of the Baptism-Minded and Defenseless Christians*. In the book, van Braght tells of martyrs from the early church and persecuted groups in Europe through the Anabaptists of the 16th and 17th centuries.

The 1685 edition—*The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Baptism-Minded, or Defenseless Christians*—added Jan Luyken's etchings depicting events described in the text, including execution scenes, family farewells and moments of decision.

One story tells of Anneken Jans, drowned in 1539 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, after she was arrested for singing a hymn in public. Another remembers Dirk Willems, from Asperen, the Netherlands, who escaped from prison but stopped running to rescue his pursuer, who had fallen into an icy pond, only to be recaptured and executed in 1569.

"These are heroic, mythic tales designed to inspire allegiance to Mennonite identity and conformity to its ethic of nonviolence at any cost," said Julia Spicher Kasdorf, professor of writing at Penn State University in University Park.

In the early 1740s, German-speaking Mennonite immigrants to Pennsylvania ended efforts to gain exemption from military service after colonial authorities directed them to take their request to the king's officials in England.

"Rather than attempt to change public policy, they would publish the *Martyrs Mirror*," Kasdorf said.

In 1748-49, Mennonite leaders commissioned the translation and printing of the tome in Ephrata. At 1,500 pages, it was the largest book published in colonial America.

Several hundred of the copies remained unsold. During the Revolutionary War, the Continental army confiscated some of them to turn the paper into gun cartridges.

After the Ephrata edition, a pattern continued of American Mennonite leaders reprinting the *Martyrs Mirror* at times of war or leading up to war to inspire the preservation of nonresistance, Kasdorf said. The first English edition was in 1837.

"The martyr becomes an alternative soldier, so the pacifist is not seen as a coward but as a hero," she said.

Martyrs Mirror has power even for those who have not read it, Kasdorf said. She finds it difficult to read herself, in large part because of the antagonistic language used to describe members of state churches, who saw Anabaptists as heretics.

"It can get in the way of conversation with other Christians," she said.

In the 16th century and today, heresy and martyrdom are a matter of definition, said Sarah Covington, professor of history at Queens College at the City University of New York.

"One person's martyr is another person's terrorist," Covington said. "In a sense, martyrs are religious extremists."

Martyrs die for what they understand to be one unified truth, she said.

"Martyrdom resists an ecumenical age like ours," Covington said. "[Martyrs] represent a pure faith, a faith not watered down."

In *Martyrs Mirror*, women as well as men testify to their faith and understanding of truth.

While women's public speaking was limited in the 16th and 17th centuries, authorities required women to speak for themselves when trying them for crimes such as heresy, said Jean Kilheffer-Hess of East Petersburg, Pa., who collects and studies oral histories.

"Early Anabaptist women facing arrest and execution boldly used their voices and words to shape hostile situations to their own ends," Kilheffer-Hess said. "They knew 'the personal is political' long before the 20th century popularized the phrase."

Humility shaped the early Anabaptist understanding of suffering and martyrdom, said Andrew Martin, a doctoral student at Toronto School of Theology.

"Central to the Anabaptist ethical heritage is a self that was transformed on the journey toward ultimate truth through an encounter with God and the expectation of meeting him face-to-face in death," Martin said. "Anabaptists have left us a spiritual legacy that is foundational for Christian ethics today."—Celeste Kennel-Shenk of *Mennonite Weekly Review* for Meetinghouse

Unexpected blessing changes career path

Service Adventure volunteer touched by homeless man in Albuquerque

Photo provided

From left, Gabe and Bethany Bauman Baker, MaryBeth Cornelsen, Sam Miller Jacobs and Joe Arbaugh make up the 2009-2010 Service Adventure group in Albuquerque, N.M.

MaryBeth Cornelsen received an unexpected response when she asked Charles, a homeless man, how he was doing. Charles' reply sparked a passion in Cornelsen that led her to study social work and advocate for the homeless.

"I am blessed," Charles replied to Cornelsen. "God allowed me to wake up today. I am blessed."

Charles' authentic character and concern for others caught the attention of everyone around him, especially Cornelsen. Every weekday morning, Charles visited St. Martin's Hospitality Center in Albuquerque, N.M., for a shower and a hot breakfast. He left at 10 a.m., often walking down the street and around the corner to the library, his only possessions in a backpack. And when he asked others the commonplace question, How are you? he meant it.

Cornelsen, a 2009-2010 Service Adventure worker from Weatherford, Okla., traded in the papers and deadlines of college for a year of service in Albuquerque. Her original assignment was at Learn and Play Childcare Center, a day care in Albuquerque. Although Cornelsen loves children, two months was long enough to realize that it wasn't her niche.

Cornelsen had visited various homeless shelters on church youth group trips, so when the opportunity came to move from the day care to Saint Martin's Hospitality Center, she jumped on it. She wanted to lend a hand to the homeless, regardless of whether or not they called themselves blessed the way Charles did.

The shelter provides 240 to 400 people with daily showers, breakfast, mail, clothes, advocacy and behavioral health programs. As shelter assistant, Cornelsen aimed to empower and integrate Albuquerque's homeless into the community by connecting each individual with the services that met their needs.

Like any city, Albuquerque's streets are speckled with those who look like they're going through tough times.

As Cornelsen drove down Albuquerque streets with friends, they often passed people who appeared to be homeless. She remembers her passengers asking, "Do you know them? Do you see them at the shelter?"

"Holding a cardboard sign does not make them a bad person," Cornelsen said. "They've just fallen on a little bad luck."

Bethany Bauman Baker, Cornelsen's Service Adventure unit leader, was touched by the focus and motivation that working with the homeless gave Cornelsen. Bauman Baker told of a time when she and Cornelson went out for coffee together.

A man approached the two women, asking for money. While excuses and skepticism weigh heavily in the minds of many, Cornelsen's reaction was different, Bauman Baker remembers. Her hand automatically reached out to give the man a few coins: a symbol of passing on a blessing.

Cornelsen plans to study social work next fall at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., so that she can "empower the people that need services." While doing so, she hopes that others may realize their blessings as well.—*Kelsey Shue for Mennonite Mission Network*

Holding a cardboard sign does not make them a bad person.—MaryBeth Cornelsen

Partners aid earthquake relief in Chile

Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Church Canada and MCC collaborate.

From left, Juanita and César Flores, Eduard Klassen, and Carlos Gallardo consider damages during travels in Chile.

Although Mennonite Mission Network does not operate as a relief organization, three decades of relationship-building in Chile laid foundations that helped local congregations provide a rapid response following Feb. 27's 8.8-magnitude earthquake. Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness introduced Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to Chilean church partners to collaborate in planning a longer-term disaster response.

MCC does not have program or personnel in Chile, so the $150,000 raised for earthquake relief is being channeled through churches, identified by colleague organizations, including Mennonite Mission Network and Witness.

Immediately following the quake and its aftermath, which affected 80 percent of the country's population, Chilean partner churches began assessing damages and planning aid operations. In April, Titus Guenther, professor at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba, with service experience in Chile, returned to the country on special assignment with Mission Network and Witness to connect MCC representatives César Flores (Bolivia) and Eduard Klassen (Paraguay) with Chilean Anabaptist church leaders.

The ministry of Omar Cortés Gaibur, Mission Network international partnership associate, and Guenther's leadership in IMPaCT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together—an annual event led by Mennonite Church Canada) brought three Chilean Anabaptist groups together—Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Chile (UBACH), the Evangelical Mennonite Church and the Puerta del Rebaño (Door of the Sheepfold) congregation in Concepción.

This international partnership provided MCC with information necessary for determining appropriate relief aid and distribution. As Mennonite partners toured the hardest-hit regions that included congregations of the three Chilean church bodies, Guenther reported great devastation that was already being cleared for reconstruction.

"We saw fishing boats and shipping containers kilometers inland, far from where they normally belong," Guenther says.

In one city, although 500,000 buildings needed to be bulldozed before rebuilding could begin, temporary wood structures were already set up for families who lost everything.

"Amid this situation, we heard stories of people whose homes had collapsed or been swept away going to worse-hit areas in order to offer assistance," Guenther says.

He also reported that small Mennonite churches, operating in situations of chronic poverty, were able to provide immediate responses by sending truckloads of necessities to the coal-mining town of Lota. The Puerta del Rebaño congregation provided free medical and pastoral counsel. A congregation in Santiago sent a youth group to an orphanage near the earthquake epicentre bearing toys and treats.

"In reality, God has shown us great mercy because very few people died," says Carlos Gallardo, a Puerta del Rebaño pastor and IMPaCT participant.

"Just your coming and being with us already changes things for us," said Mónica Parada, a Puerta del Rebaño pastor.

UBACH's president, Raquel Contreras, visited Baptist congregations in the most affected provinces prior to Guenther's visit. She said that UBACH's plan was to first restore homes before the winter rains, and then repair damaged church buildings.

Despite the cooperation and quick response, Guenther reported that churches are aware of the long and arduous road ahead. Work continues on restoring services such as electricity, water and garbage removal, as well as bridge and road repair.

"We invited all sister churches to fill out reconstruction project forms in order to apply for Mennonite Central Committee's relief funds" Guenther says.

These funds will predominantly be used for building and furnishing houses and trauma programs.—*Adapted from a Mennonite Church Canada release by Deb Froese, contributed by Mennonite Church Canada*

Tools help Congolese refugees rebuild livelihoods

Gardening tools help 635 refugee families in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Tim Lind

Loading new tools on their backs, women from eastern Congo head to their homes to begin preparing their fields.

Hoes, rakes, forks and machetes are more than gardening tools for 635 families in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

They are keys to rebuilding the lives of refugees who were forced from their Kasika homes in eastern Congo last spring because of conflict between military groups.

As the refugees started returning home last fall, many found their homes destroyed and their belongings gone.

To help the families get re-established, the Church of Christ of Congo planned and implemented a distribution of farming tools on May 17, supplied by Mennonite Central Committee. The Church of Christ of Congo, a Protestant ecumenical organization, is a longtime MCC partner. A second stage of the program will include providing seeds and a limited supply of food to help people cope until harvest.

Kasika was the site of a major massacre in 1998, when more than 1,000 civilians were reportedly killed by invading armies. Many families have had to abandon their homes on multiple occasions. Kasika is located near the town of Mwenga, about 100 kilometers to the southwest of Bukavu, the provincial capital of South Kivu. MCC and the Church of Christ of Congo provided food assistance to displaced people in the Mwenga area in 2008 and 2009. This part of the province is relatively secure now, allowing the tool recipients, who are mostly women, to begin planting. Niminenge Bondo, one woman who received implements, was asked how soon she would prepare her fields. "Tomorrow," Bondo said, without hesitation.—*Mennonite Central Committee staff*

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Opinion *(Continued from page 36)*

much concern, fear and financial anguish. But we believe it will be good for us. It serves as a prophetic step to call out injustice and moves us away from the much maligned "quiet in the land" approach to political concerns.

That said, we also believe existing programs in Arizona should remain intact. Mennonite Voluntary Service, SOOP and any other collaborative work with Mennonite churches in Arizona should continue. This is not the time to sever relationships where we can be a prophetic voice and where we have worked and lived for many years. Mennonite Church USA has stated publicly that the Latino churches are of great importance to the future of the denomination. If this is the case, we call on Mennonite Church USA to take seriously the concerns and ideas raised by our constituent churches in Arizona and Latino churches across the United States. TM

First fruits from Ukraine project

Horticulture program will reach out to 5,000 small farmers in five years.

Take one part excellent soil, mix with one great climate, lots of sweat equity and no small measure of Mennonite agricultural innovation, and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) has a recipe for success in helping small farmers in Ukraine grow their businesses.

MEDA president Allan Sauder led his board of directors in June on a tour of the $10 million Ukraine Horticulture Development Project (UHDP), a five-year program supported by the Canadian International Development Agency and MEDA.

For some board members who trace their roots to the old Mennonite colonies, it was a homecoming of a sort, as they toured historical sites in the Zaporizhzhia and Chortitza area and the Mennonite Center in Molochansk.

But the highlights of the tour were meeting with some of the 1,500 UHDP clients who are beginning not only to taste the fruits of their labors but also relish the fruits of the spirit in the form of new hope for a brighter future.

One of them was Vera Morozova, who farms strawberries and onions on 17 hectares (42 acres) of rented land near Melitopol. Morozova, a former civil servant, was at first leery of the agronomist offering help. But now she is happy to have access to expert knowledge and credit and to be part of a system of clusters of farmers tapping into economies of scale, modern production technologies and larger, more lucrative markets.

Morozova is one of 10 farmers working as a group and learning from each other. She also consolidates the group's produce for sale. Over time, she'd like to try better varieties of plants, but for the moment, she says, she is content.

"I am providing employment to 30 seasonal workers, and my land is being used and loved," she says.

Over five years, UHDP will reach out to 5,000 small farmers like Morozova, increasing their incomes and helping return this historical breadbasket of Europe to its former glory. The week-long tour in early June ended with board meetings to approve MEDA's plans for the upcoming year.

"We as a board were inspired by the opportunity to meet our staff in the Ukraine," says board chair Allon Lefever, "and feel very motivated to continue MEDA's work as we observed the impact MEDA is having with small holder farmers in the Ukraine.

"We're anticipating an exciting year of tremendous growth in the double digits, with $42 million in revenue from projects in 45 countries," he says. "But more important, we are aiming to help alleviate poverty for almost 10 million families around the world."—*Linda Whitmore of Mennonite Economic Development Associates*

Howard Good

Vera Morozova (left) and her daughter Oksana present a sample of Vera's strawberry crop for MEDA board members to sample.

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EMM prayer team visits Czech Republic

Members seek input from Czech Brethren church leaders, build relationships.

Beth Gibbs

The prayer team at a bell tower overlooking a city they visited in the south of the Czech Republic in June. From front: Maria Bowman, Todd Bowman, Richard Buckwalter and Stacy Nofziger.

A pioneering prayer team returned from a week in the Czech Republic with new relationships and a clearer vision for the future.

The team of eight, sent out by Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) on June 11, explored the country and met with leaders of the Czech Brethren church to consider long-term EMM involvement in the area.

Upon arrival, the group was struck by the spiritual barrenness left from the country's difficult history.

On his first prayer walk in Prague, Jim Dombach, EMM's area representative to Europe and a member of the team, noticed a painted message on a doorway which read, "God why?"

"As we walked around there and observed things, there was a lot of emptiness," Dombach said.

Until 20 years ago, the Central European country was under a Soviet government that strongly discouraged any religious belief.

Approximately 60 percent of the people identified themselves as atheists, agnostics or nonbelievers on the 2001 census. Despite this, the team felt they should also be aware of "deep wells" of historical Christian belief and community within the country.

An actual well within the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague served as a reminder. The chapel was built in 1391 and shortly thereafter entertained the preaching of John Hus, the Czech reformer and martyr. The well and the chapel's history impressed Maria Bowman, a member of the team, with the realization that "Jesus has been here, Jesus is here, and Jesus will be here."

Early on, the team met with leaders of the Czech Brethren to seek their input and partnership for a long-term EMM presence in the country. This denomination is one of the largest and oldest evangelical Christian communities within the Czech Republic. Bowman said that the Brethren leaders, though in need of more pastors and workers, harbor bold plans for their nation and a strong desire to grow their church.

"I firmly believe we will be further ahead [in our outreach] if we work with the national church," Dombach said.

Several members of the prayer team acknowledged the danger of arrogance or insensitivity as EMM looks to enter the Czech Republic. The Czech people will be understandably wary of the motives of outside forces entering their country, according to team member Beth Gibbs. "For those who go there, it will be important to find out what it was like to live in [the Soviet] era," she said.

Despite past abuses against the Czech Brethren from outsiders, the EMM team felt that they were able to build a strong relationship with the church leaders.

"Initially they may have viewed us as intruders, but now [they] see us as partners," Dombach said. He sees many opportunities for service within the Czech Republic. There is a strong desire for English teachers and many opportunities among the street kids, prostitutes, Roma population and other marginalized people groups.

I firmly believe we will be further ahead [in our outreach] if we work with the national church.—Jim Dombach

Two short-term EMM workers recently returned from the Czech Republic, and two more will go at the beginning of next year.

After their encouraging visit, the prayer team members expect to see more collaboration between EMM and the Czech church in the future.—*Kristina Charles*

University offers safe space for Lithuanians

Bible classes, spiritual conversations for many atheist students

Gregg Brubaker says he enjoys teaching the entry level "math and logic" class at LCC International University in Klaipeda, Lithuania, because it gives him a significant way of connecting with all incoming students.

"It's a math class, not one where we talk about God," says Gregg, who along with his wife, Sharon, has served with Eastern Mennonite Missions at the university for the past eight years. "In that class we 'plow the ground'—point to God—without saying God."

Gregg says that many of the students at LCC International University (formerly Lithuania Christian College) are not Christians and have an atheistic worldview, so talking about God would turn them off.

But in the course of their university studies at LCC, the students are also required to take Bible classes. That, Gregg believes, will be the "seed sowing" time, and he says he hopes the "seeds" will fall on "fallow ground that has gotten plowed up" in his introductory math class.

Each year in his math classes Gregg also looks for several promising students to mentor in more intentional ways, outside the classroom. One Christian student he was mentoring reported that one of Gregg's lectures—in which Gregg had integrated math and spirituality—became the talk of the dorm for the next week.

Sharon Brubaker had also served at LCC, but she stepped back from her role as campus chaplain two years ago, when the Brubakers adopted Lithuanian sons Erik and David.

This year Sharon picked up a new part-time role as assistant to the president for church relations in Europe. With Sharon's strong Lithuanian language skills and relationships across denominational lines, she is uniquely positioned to give leadership to a whole new level of interchurch cooperation.

During the Soviet era, evangelical denominations in Lithuania had blended for survival, but now they have become more competitive. Each has focused on claiming its own identity, at the expense of cooperation and collaboration.

Unlike most other European countries, Lithuania has never even been able to form an evangelical alliance—so there have been few forums for interdenominational conversations.

Last February, Sharon helped plan the first interdenominational pastors' conference and was pleased to see more than 60 participants from 42 different churches.

The conference, held at LCC, focused on the topic of pastoral care in a post-Soviet era. At the conference, three interdenominational roundtable groups discussed these questions: What is a post-Soviet person? What is the church's duty to society? Could the churches in Lithuania have a common vision for reaching society?

"This is really a hard group to pull together," Sharon said, "but LCC is seen as a safe, neutral place. We knew we had really met a need when we heard comments like, 'We need these gatherings. Give us more time to talk with each other.' "

Sharon says she is grateful to feel the trust and respect of a wide variety of Christian leaders throughout the country and that many are beginning to feel comfortable meeting together at LCC, where no one has a "home court advantage."—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Photo supplied

At the interdenominational pastors' conference held at LCC International University in February, Sharon Brubaker (standing) introduces a table group (from left): Holger LaHayne, from the Evangelical Reformed church; Susanne Kettler-Riutkenen from the Salvation Army; Ina Kamaityte, an LCC counselor from the Roman Catholic Church; and Benediktas Jurcys, a Franciscan Brother.

Mennonite Brethren reconcile with German Mennonites

MB statement says, 'Unloving patterns of behavior and perception were sinful.'

Mennonite Brethren churches in Detmold, Germany, are seeking reconciliation with Mennonite churches. On May 24, during 150th anniversary celebrations, Mennonite Brethren church officials read a statement asking for forgiveness for spiritual arrogance, pride and lack of love, for excluding brothers and sisters from their community as well as for a contemptuous attitude toward other Mennonite churches. Their common desire is to be open to communication and opportunities for cooperation.

The following people read the statement: Walter Jakobeit, chair of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Brüdergemeinden, Johann Richert, chair of Bund Taufgesinnter Gemeinden, and Silke Brohl, chair of Verband der Evangelischen Freikirchen Mennonitischer Brüdergemeinden in Bayern.

Representatives of several Mennonite conferences gave short responses. Hermann Heidebrecht, Bielefeld, Germany, chair of Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur geistlichen Unterstützung in Mennonitengemeinden, expressed joy about this "small step" and emphasized that Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches seek the same goal and have had a common desire for peace in the past.

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Mennonite Church USA

Daniel Janzen, speaking for WEBB (independent Mennonite congregations), said that cooperation is possible as it has been for many years on the board of Bienenberg Bible School.

Frieder Boller, chair of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland, gave thanks for the newly opened door and encouraged communication.

The statement said that in preparing for this 150th anniversary and while writing the church's history, people became aware once more of God's kindness and mercy. Since 1860, Mennonite Brethren churches and other Mennonite congregations have crossed paths many times. Both denominations experienced renewal, mission and growth and at this anniversary, both sides could thank and praise God for his kindness and mercy.

It noted that 50 years ago at Reedley, Calif., the North American Mennonite Brethren Church and General Conference Mennonite Church asked for and granted each other forgiveness and celebrated reconciliation.

The statement confessed that old, unloving patterns of behavior and perception were sinful and expressed sorrow and regret for pride, unkindness and hurtful exclusion of other Mennonite brothers and sisters.

The statement signed by church officials concluded with, "Our future cooperation and community has to be guided by fraternal love following the commandment of Christ and by mutual appreciation. As an independent congregational movement we intend to be open to resolving communication and to opportunities for cooperation."

> As an independent congregational movement we intend to be open to resolving communication and to opportunities for cooperation.—Mennonite Brethren statement

In a concluding prayer, Hans von Niessen, former director of Umsiedlerbetreuung, asked God for forgiveness and blessings.

Following the prayer, church representatives on stage joined hands while the audience expressed their agreement with applause.—*Benji Wiebe (mennonews.de), translated by Liesa Unger*

Lutherans ask forgiveness from Mennonites

Lutheran World Federation action represents 70 members worldwide.

When Lutherans from around the world gathered in July, they planned to seek a historic reconciliation with Mennonites and other Christians of the Anabaptist tradition.

Delegates to Lutheran World Federation (LWF) gathering in Stuttgart, Germany, were expected to ask "forgiveness—from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers—for the harm that our forebears in the 16th century committed" in persecuting Anabaptists.

The resolution acknowledges that in the centuries since then, Lutheran scholars and authors have often portrayed Anabaptists in misleading and hurtful ways. It also spells out commitments to continue working with contemporary Anabaptists in fostering greater understanding and fellowship.

The action, representing 70 million Lutherans worldwide, comes after several years of conversation between representatives of the LWF and of Mennonite World Conference.

In July last year, LWF general secretary Ishmael Noko of Zimbabwe—son of a Brethren in Christ mother—attended the MWC assembly in Asunción, Paraguay.

In an emotional moment for many delegates, he announced the resolution that would be presented at Stuttgart.

"This wound," Noko said, "needs the deep healing possible only when it can be seen, in the bright sunlight of memory, for the ugly wound that it is. Then we can seek for it the healing of God's forgiveness and reconciliation."

In Stuttgart, a delegation of leaders from the Mennonite World Conference planned to be on hand for the passing of the resolution. MWC president and Brethren in Christ bishop Danisa Ndlovu—who is also Zimbabwean—will respond with words of gratitude, forgiveness and commitment to further healing.

Besides Ndlovu, the MWC delegation includes general secretary Larry Miller of France, vice president Janet Plenert of Canada, treasurer Ernst Bergen of Paraguay, past president Mesach Krisetya of Indonesia, and Rainer Burkhart of Germany, co-chair of the LWF/MWC International Study Commission (2005-2008), which laid the groundwork for the LWF action.—*Byron Rempel-Burkholder of Mennonite World Conference*

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EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY

MHS Alliance told that change is way of life

Mennonite values and church connections are critical for maintaining identity.

A review of strategic priorities provided the focus for the board of Mennonite Health Services (MHS) Alliance during its meeting in Kulpsville and Philadelphia, Pa., June 9-12.

Jill Schumann, president and CEO of Lutheran Services in America, presented information about trends in society, in denominational life, in health and human services and in associations. She said that leaders can no longer talk about being in a period of great change—continuous change has become a way of life, and organizations have to adapt to survive.

Board members Valerie Rempel and Tim Wiens led the board in shaping strategic direction for the next several years. Key themes included information technology, health-care reform, maintaining identity in a pluralistic society, and the impact of demographic changes on retirement behavior and care of people with developmental disabilities. Further work will refine priorities in relation to the two primary stakeholder groups—member organizations and relating denominations.

The meeting was also informed by firsthand accounts of the challenges and opportunities encountered by member organizations in eastern Pennsylvania.

Peaceful Living of Harleysville, Pa., is a growing and thriving ministry that creates places of belonging for people with developmental disabilities. Peaceful Living is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and credits MHS Alliance for its current vitality.

Living Branches of Souderton (Pa.) was recently formed from the merger of Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods Community. CEO Ed Brubaker and board members Charlotte Hunsberger and Bill Longacre described how the boards of these two retirement communities decided to unite, an idea that had been considered for more than 40 years. Ultimately, the two organizations determined they could be more effective by operating under one board.

At Indian Creek Foundation, Souderton, Pa., board member Charlotte Rosenberger and executive director David Crosson described the challenge of working with staff members to communicate Indian Creek's Christian mission since many staff members are not comfortable with the language of faith and ministry.

John Goshow, CEO of Penn Foundation at Sellersville (Pa.) and a member of the MHS Alliance board, arranged for the board to hear from a client who is receiving services in the drug and alcohol treatment center. The 20-something young man was drawn to Penn Foundation because it offers a spiritual focus. Goshow also reflected on his upcoming retirement after 33 years.

The following themes emerged from conversations with these leaders:

Finding strong board members is a daunting task in a region saturated with dozens of Mennonite-affiliated organizations.

Leaders who understand and support Mennonite values and church connections are critical for the future identity of these organizations. Boards and executives are concerned about strengthening the pool from which the next generation of leaders will be drawn.

Executives value MHS Alliance as a place to connect with likeminded peer organizations.

Staff and board leaders look to MHS Alliance for consulting services that address organizational needs through a faith and values-grounded approach.

Organizations need resources that communicate Mennonite identity and values to employees in an invitational manner.

Members organizations are reaching out to each other across disciplines for shared programs and services.—*MHS Alliance*

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Kansas library turns 75

Western District Conference provides resources to three other conferences.

This summer a Story Time magic carpet is carrying preschoolers at the Western District Conference Resource Library around the world. Year-round, both children and adults get to broaden their minds through resource ministries provided by Western District Conference in North Newton, Kan. Begun in the 1930s as a loan library and today providing resources of various kinds to Mennonite churches in four area conferences, the Resource Library surprises many with its almost-magical wealth of faith-based information.

In 2011, the Conference Resource Library will turn 75 years old.

"We're still building on that dream," says Western District minister of Christian nurture Marlene Bogard, who heads up the Resource Library. "Several generations of pastors, children, families, educators and youth ministers have been blessed by this ministry; we hope with every good intention to continue to develop it."

Recognizing its importance within the conference, through a $1.5 million Vision 2012 fund-raising campaign, Western District constituents have given more than $133,406 for resource ministries since 2006.

With 18 months remaining to meet the $190,000 goal for resource ministry, $56,594 is needed to complete all of these projects, according to Phyllis Regier, conference treasurer and a Vision 2012 Steering Committee member.

Some Vision 2012 projects have already been completed; others are partially funded or are planned.

Library expansion: In 2007, a 600-square-foot expansion to the library was completed by using $36,000 from Vision 2012 funds. The addition opened other space for a library lounge with Internet access that meets needs of students who attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary-Great Plains Seminary classes in the building.

"We were able to double our shelf space so we could have a children's library in its own right," Bogard says. "Our children's literature collection enhances the values we ascribe to as Anabaptist Western District congregations."

Churches at a distance can access the library's 12,000 holdings. An online catalog offers books, videos, resource lists and discussion guides as well as helps for church librarians and a music lending library of 450 anthems for choirs and small groups.

Resource endowment: A total of $10,000 has gone into a future $50,000 endowment which will provide grants to congregations for a variety of educational opportunities, such as leadership training or new peace resources.

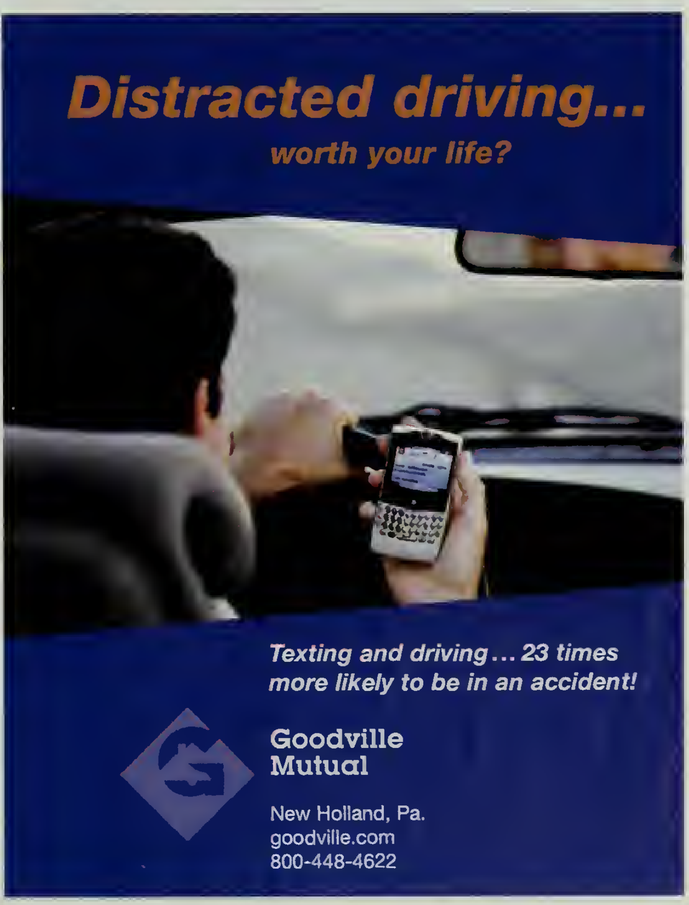
CORE Bundle: In a few months congregations who have applied will receive six books from a list of resources recommended by Bogard. The CORE Bundle (Collection of Resources for Everyone) list includes resources published by Mennonite Publishing Network within the last three years and offers items for group study and worship planning and more.

"This is a kind of resource mutual aid. We are pooling our funds together and giving back," Bogard says. "Besides expanding the church libraries, we're providing the churches with resources that shape our Anabaptist identity."

Spanish language materials: Still to be developed is the area of Spanish language materials and translation. This is in addition to ongoing translating of nearly all Western District publications.

Resource consultation fund: The resource consultation fund. It will help train congregations and leaders in areas of family and youth ministry, faith formation, worship music, peace and justice.

Western District Conference is the only area conference to support a resource library with full-time staffing. Central Plains, Mountain States and South Central use and support the Resource Library regularly through memberships.
—June Galle Krehbiel for Western District Conference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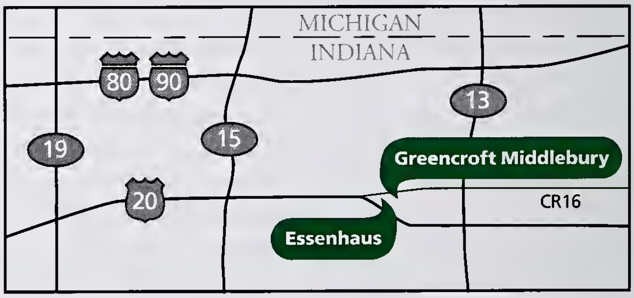

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WORKERS

Eash, Brent, ended a term as pastor at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind., on April 18.

Ginder, Larry, ended a term as associate pastor at Risser Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on May 31.

Groff, Larry, was licensed as deacon at Kinzer Mennonite Church, Kinzers, Pa., on May 23.

Gusler, Todd, was ordained as associate pastor at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., on May 16.

Heistand, Gerald, ended a term as pastor at Risser Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on May 31.

Pierce, Nathan, was licensed as lead pastor at Gingrichs Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Pa., on May 16.

Schlegel, Ben, was licensed toward ordination at Howard-Miami Mennonite, Kokomo, Ind., on May 30.

Smucker, Klaudia, ended a term as pastor of caring and adult nurture at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on June 6.

Troyer, Sheila Wagler, was licensed for specific ministry as pastor of youth and young adults at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 2.

Yoder, Anita, was licensed for specific ministry as pastor of worship and music at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 2.

Zimmerman, James, ended a term as associate pastor at Risser Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on May 31.

OBITUARIES

Alger, John Paul, 87, Broadway, Va., died May 25. Spouse: Retha Romaine Mishler Alger (deceased). Parents: John H. and Anna Hostetter Alger. Children: Victor E., Wanda L. Alger Waples; three grandchildren. Memorial service: June 5 at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway.

Barringer, Arthur L., 94, Bristol, Ind., died June 11. Parents: Chester A. and Lucy M. Barringer. Funeral: June 14 at Miller-Stewart Funeral Home, Middlebury, Ind.

Boyts, Jim N., 76, Hesston, Kan., died June 12 of complications related to leukemia. Spouse: Belle Stoltzfus Boyts. Parents: Earl and Marie Barber Boyts. Children: Pam Gerber, Randal, Annette Brant, Diana Young; 14 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Burkey, Teresa A. Eicher, 91, Sun City, Ariz., died May 19. Spouse: Perry Burkey (deceased). Parents: William and Lydia Eicher. Children: Lillian Laurinec, Margaret Martin, Bonnie Simons; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 in Sun City; graveside memorial at Eastlawn Cemetery, Hesston, Kan.

Claassen, Kathryn D. Linsenmeyer, 84, Goshen, Ind., and Beatrice, Neb., died May 13. Spouse: Edward Claassen (deceased). Parents: Frederick and Agness Riley Linsenmeyer. Children: Shirley Dick, Dennis; five grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen and May 22 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, Neb.

Doerksen, Martin E., 88, Inman, Kan., died June 16. Spouse: Evelyn Dirks Pankratz Doerksen. Parents: Jacob W. and Kathryn Ediger Doerksen. Children: Cal, Brian; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Eller, Barbara Ann Butler, 69, Coopersburg, Pa., died June 5. Spouse: Nile G. Eller. Parents: Harry Earl Butler and Marion Lauer West. Children: Kimberly Stancato, David, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Gaeddert, Harriett Knowles, 94, North Newton, Kan., died May 31. Spouse: Walter E. Gaeddert (deceased). Parents: Harry P. and Eleanor M. Potter Knowles. Children: Jim, Dick, Allen; nine grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; 11 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Graber, Annie S. Unruh, 95, Vermillion, S.D., died June 18. Spouse: Waldo "Slim" Graber (deceased). Parents: Henry and Marie Wek Unruh. Children: Morris, Kermit, Loren; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 23 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Graber, Charles J., 97, Stryker, Ohio, died May 4. Spouse: Anna Karen Swartz Graber (deceased). Parents: Amos and Lydia Short Graber. Children: John, Anna K. Hershberger; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at Pin Grove Mennonite Church, Stryker.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Hershberger, Velma Arlene Hershberger, 85, Hesston, Kan., died June 27. Spouse: Herman Hershberger. Parents: Ora J. and Bertha Guengerich Hershberger. Children: Mary Lou Hershberger, Kermit D., Vietta Hershberger Krehbiel; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 1 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Hofer, George M., 94, Freeman, S.D., died June 18 following hip surgery. Spouse: Margaret L. Hofer. Parents: Mike K. and Anna Gross Hofer. Children: Yvonne Schnarr, George J., Rodney; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Jacoby, Sharon L. Detweiler, 58, Milford Township, Pa., died May 23. Spouse: James H. Jacoby. Parents: Paul K. and Joyce M. Snyder Detweiler. Children: Jamie P., Tanya Jenkins; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 27 at Rockhill Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Jennings, John, 91, Goshen, Ind., died June 18. John was born Aug. 29, 1918, in Knoxville, Tenn., to Rev. William and Anna Good Jennings and was the youngest of 11 children. He attended the University of Tennessee and Goshen College. There he met and married Polly Blosser Jennings April 12, 1941. They shared 63 years together. John owned John Jennings and Associates Insurance Agency for 32 years and was a leader in life insurance sales becoming a member of the national Million Dollar Round Table. Mr. Jennings was one of the founders of Greencroft Retirement Communities and served as Chairman of the Board from 1962-1978. He leaves to cherish his memory, three daughters, Marilyn (Jim) Berkey of Austin, Texas, Elaine (Steve) Buerge of Fort Scott, Kan., and Vicki Jennings of South Bend, Ind.; five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Those who wish may make memorial contributions in John Jennings' name to Greencroft Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46526.

Kaufman, Leona Wilma Herbst, 87, Marion, S.D., died July 1. Spouse: Richard Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Herman and Martha Arbeiter Herbst. Child: Kenton. Funeral: July 6 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Keeler, Alvin W., 85, Telford, Pa., died June 17 of cancer. Spouse: Thelma Pearl Freed Keeler. Parents: Alvin C. and Addie R. Wisler Keeler. Children: Terry L., Timothy S.; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Klopfenstein, Orpha A. Fielitz, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died July 3. Spouse: Roy G. Klopfenstein (deceased). Parents: John Sr. and Verna Graber Fielitz. Children: Wynemia Waidelich, Sharon Lantz; eight grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 7 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Koch, Roy Swartz, 96, Goshen, Ind., died June 12. Spouse: Martha Horst Koch. Parents: Charles and Minerva Swartz Koch. Children: Robert, Arlene Holdeman, Richard, Rodney, Jane Oyer, Sheila Graber; 18 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 16 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Lapp, Allen Wayne, 81, Kalispell, Mont., died March 18 following a stroke. Spouse: Mary Alice Eby Lapp. Parents: Frank and Lena Kauffman Lapp. Children: Robert, Sandi Heine, Nancy Kanagy, Julie Lapp, John; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

Leichty, Lorene E., 73, Wayland, Iowa, died June 2. Parents: Simon and Lavina Marie Roth Leichty. Funeral: June 6 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

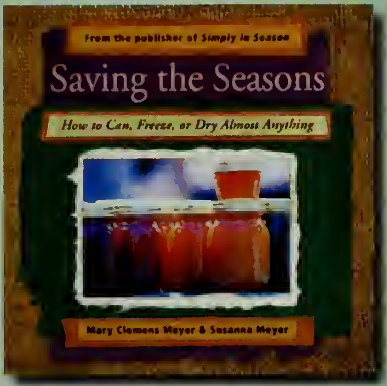
Loux, Dr. Norman L., 90, Lansdale, Pa., died May 20. Spouse: Esther Elizabeth Brunk Loux (deceased). Parents: Abram C. and Martha Landis Loux. Children: Elizabeth L. Kraybill, Peter D., Philip M.; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 23 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Martin, Gladys Koch, 94, Elmira, Ontario, died June 20. Spouse: Norman Martin (deceased). Parents: Charles and Minerva Swartz Koch. Children: Winston, Raymond, Isabel Bauman, Bernice Brubacher, Elaine Stolzfus, Edith Edmiston; 18 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 23 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Miller, Alpha B. Yoder, 98, Goshen, Ind., died May 25. Spouse: David M. Miller (deceased), Roy R. Birkey (deceased). Parents: Mose and Mary Troyer Yoder. Child: Carol Beachy; three grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: May 29 at the Gathering Place, Greecroft Retirement Communities, Goshen.

Miller, Roby M. Miller, 95, Berlin, Ohio, died June 27. Spouse: Lester N. Miller (deceased). Parents: Harvey H. and Amanda Mast Miller. Children: Robert, Budd, Duane, Ted; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 30 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Nafziger, Carl J., 86, Wauseon, Ohio, died June 12. Spouse: Maribell Brown Nafziger. Parents: Elmer and Lillie Yoder Nafziger. Children: Linda Nafziger, Elaine Swartzbaugh. Funeral: June 17 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.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Oester, David "Gord" Gordon, 72, Springs, Pa., died July 1. Spouse: Lois M. Deemer Oester. Spouse: Sandy Gortner Oester (deceased). Parents: Lewis and Ruth Miller Oester. Step-children: Larry Householder, Linda Laurinatis, Pamela Shatraw; 11 step-grandchildren; eight step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 4 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Oyer, Margaret Vera Birkey, 85, Cheona, Ill., died July 3. Spouse: Verle Oyer (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Amelia Zehr Birkey. Children: Verle Curtis, Vera Christine Oyer, Vance Gordon. Funeral: July 7 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Ranck, Robert H., 89, Lancaster, Pa., died June 17 of cancer. Spouse: Alta M. Martin Hoover Ranck. Spouse: Mildred Denlinger Ranck (deceased). Spouse: Pauline Peifer Ranck (deceased). Parents: David Herr Ranck and Susan Kreider Hostetter Ranck. Children: John, Jim, Janet Martin, Jean Cann, Joe, Doug Ranck Dirks; 12 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 21 at Rohrerstown Mennonite Church, Rohrerstown, Pa.

Regier, Eugene, 77, Turpin, Okla., died May 24 of cancer. Spouse: Florence Dick Regier. Parents: Henry B. and Lena Nachtigal Regier. Children: Bob, Alan, Kerry; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 28 at Turpin Mennonite Church.

Roth, Velma Mae Short, 88, Archbold, Ohio, died June 26. Spouse: Amos Roth (deceased). Parents: Adam H. and Edith Roth Short. Funeral: July 1 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Schrag, John Mark, 65, East Lansing, Mich., died May 25 of cardiac arrest. Fiancee: Kathy Ackerman. Spouse: Nancy Davis Schrag (deceased). Parents: Gordon and Laura Nettie Sherk Schrag. Memorial service: June 6 at Timber Ridge Golf Club, East Lansing.

Sneary, Wayne Lewis, 41, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 2 of brain cancer. Spouse: Shannon Yvette Martens Sneary. Parents: Floyd Clinton and Barbara Faye Souders Sneary. Children: Justus Keith, Jalyn Rae, Jedrek Lewis. Funeral: June 7 at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Souder, Stanley K., 80, Telford, Pa., died June 6. Spouse: Velma M. Martin Souder. Parents: Edwin and Ruth Kraybill Souder. Children: Kris Detweiler, Kathy Risser, Deb Hedrick, Donna Derstine, Jane Seaman, Michael, D. Kevin, Lisa Grasse; 21 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 10 at Rockhill Mennonite Church, Telford.

Stutzman, Marianna Maude Reiff, 93, Goshen, Ind., died March 5. Spouse: Roman Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Vernon and Zaidee Brenneman Reiff. Child: Ron; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Weaver, Dale M., 71, New Holland, Pa., died June 13 of cancer and meningitis. Spouse: Irene Martin Weaver. Parents: Victor F. and Edith Martin Weaver. Children: Dawn Isley, Sue Weaver, Tina Smigocki; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 27 at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa.

Zehr, Adeline Widrick Kirch, 80, Lowville, N.Y., died June 25. Spouse: Richard Zehr (deceased). Robert Kirch (deceased). Parents: John and Ellen Lehman Widrick. Children: Katherine Donovan, Lynn Dobranksy, John Kirch, Bob Kirch Jr., Diane Lewis, Alan Kirch, Cheryl Hilton, Nancy Woodard, Marcia Howard; step-children: Carolyn Ashcraft, Cheryl Zehr, Cynthia Zehr, Cathleen Zehr; 22 grandchildren; several great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 28 at Ideneker Funeral Home, Lowville.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron, Ohio, is seeking a full-time lead pastor. Candidates should demonstrate competent skills in preaching, teaching and pastoral care, with an emphasis on evangelism through lay leadership, outreach, volunteer and mission activities. Interested candidates should contact the Salem Search Committee by e-mail: SalemSearchCommittee@salemmennonite.us; by phone at 330-857-4131.

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Zion Mennonite Church in Broadway, Va., is seeking a ***half-time associate pastor*** to provide leadership in the area of faith formation of youth, young adults and families and provide complementary pastoral leadership to the lead pastor in other areas of the congregation's ministries. Master of Divinity preferred. Pastoral or church leadership experience accepted in lieu of M.Div. Send letter of interest, resumé and references to Marv Nisly, 2310 Maple Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or fmnisly@comcast.net.

Ski Timberline, W.V., $99, complete two-day ski package, two nights bunkhouse lodging, lift ticket, regular ski rental, beginner ski lesson, five meals; 800-392-0152; www.timberlinegroups.com.

Living Branches, a small system of Mennonite-sponsored retirement living communities in southeastern Pennsylvania, seeks a compassionate Anabaptist leader with an ecumenical approach to ministry to serve as ***director of pastoral care services***. The director will lead a team of chaplains/pastors to meet the spiritual needs of residents of Dock Meadows, Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods. Five years of pastoral and/or chaplain ministry required, and masters-level training and CPE preferred. To learn more, visit www.livingbranches.org or call Russell Mast at 215-368-4438.

Young adult minister, part-time: oversee and coordinate all aspects of young adult ministry encouraging meaningful involvement in mission and ministry. May be combined with half-time worship and creative arts minister position. ***Hope Community Church***, Fleetwood, Pa. Inquiries: garyb@hopecomm.org.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking a ***full-time teaching faculty member in preaching and communication*** with additional competence in another area of practical theology, biblical studies, or theology, to begin July 2011. Responsibilities include teaching; use of several modes of instruction including online; advising students; and contributing through research, worship, and community and constituency assignments. Candidates must have a terminal degree (Ph.D. preferred or D.Min.) in preaching and communication, experience preaching in a variety of contexts, teaching and/or ministrial experience, passion for the church, and strong communication abilities; pastoral, cross-cultural or international ministry experience a plus. More information available at www.ambs.edu/employment. By Sept. 30, send letter of application, CV, and list of references to Rebecca Slough, Academic Dean, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517 or electronically to rslough@ambs.edu.

Worship and creative arts minister, half-time: plan and direct weekly contemporary worship service; responsible to oversee/coordinate musical, artistic, & technical elements. May be combined with part-time young adult minister position. **Hope Community Church**, Fleetwood, Pa. Inquiries: garyb@hopecomm.org.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

I	E	M	I	M	A	H		I	I	R	Z	A	H
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Conrad Grebel
University College

PRESIDENT FOR CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The Board of Governors of Conrad Grebel University College invites applications and/or nominations for the position of President, expected to be effective **July 1, 2011**. Conrad Grebel University College is a liberal arts college founded by the Mennonite Church, affiliated with the University of Waterloo, and grounded by its Christian identity and Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated ability for engaging various communities in fostering:

- the College values and mission – to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue justice and peace in service to church and society;
- its programs, which embrace undergraduate courses in Arts including the University of Waterloo Music and Peace & Conflict Studies programs, a graduate Theological Studies program, and an exceptional undergraduate residence and student life program. The resources of the College Library and Archives support these programs.

The College is committed to employment equity. Preference will be given to candidates who stand within the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition and have earned a doctorate. All inquiries will be kept in strict confidence. Applications and resumes should be received by **November 1, 2010** and be addressed to:

The Chair
Presidential Search Committee
Conrad Grebel University College
140 Westmount Road N.
Waterloo, ON, N2L 3G6, CANADA
E-mail: **grebelsearch@uwaterloo.ca**
Profile and other details are found at:
http://www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/contact/presidential_search.shtml

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking a ***full-time teaching faculty member in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible***, to begin July 2011. Responsibilities include teaching Hebrew language and exegesis of the Old Testament; use of several modes of instruction including online; advising students; and contributing through research, worship, and community and constituency assignments. Candidates must have a Ph.D. or equivalent degree in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, passion for the church and the place of biblical studies in the church, and strong communication abilities; teaching experience and international or cross-cultural experience preferred. More information available at www.ambs.edu/employment. By Sept. 1, send letter of application, CV, and list of references to Rebecca Slough, Academic Dean, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517 or rslough@ambs.edu.

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! See website for the 2011 heritage tours, including Holland, Germany, Poland, France and Switzerland. www.mennoniteheritagetours.com.

RESOURCES

The Yoke of Jesus: A School for the Soul in Solitude by Addison Hodges Hart (Eerdmans, 2010, $14) is an inviting, inspiring guide for any Christian seeking to encounter God anew. Hart is at once informative and pragmatic in his approach, grounding essential spiritual disciplines in both Scripture and patristic sources and making them supremely relevant for followers of Jesus in the 21st century.

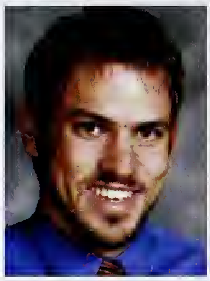
Which Trinity? Whose Monotheism? Philophical and Systematic Theologians on the Metaphysics of Trinitarian Theology by Thomas H. McCall (Eerdmans, 2010, $30) breaks new ground in bringing together the work of some significant systematic and philosophical theologians on the doctrine of the Trinity. McCall creatively engages such philosophers of religion as Richard Swinburne and Brian Leftow and such influential theologians as Jürgen Moltmann, Robert Jenson and John Zizioulas.

Between Relativism and Fundamentalism: Religious Resources for a Middle Position, edited by Peter L. Berger (Eerdmans, 2010, $17), gathers a group of scholars to consider how, from out of different traditions, one can define a middle position between the extremes of relativism and fundamentalism, which dominate our contemporary culture. Three essays ("sociological descriptions") give an objective picture of how relativism and fundamentalism play out in today's world. In a second part ("theological directions"), authors from several different Christian traditions and once conservative Jewish tradition flesh out a normative middle ground that is neither relativist—they affirm specific truth claims—nor fundamentalist—their affirmations include tolerance of the claims of others.

Notes from Underground: A New Translation, translated by Boris Jakim (Eerdmans, 2010, $15), is more faithful to the original Russian of Dostoevsky's book, one of the most profound and unsettling works of modern literature. Jakim maintains the coarse, vivid language underscoring the "visceral experimentalism" that made both the book and its protagonist groundbreaking and iconic.

The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (Paraclete Press, 2010, $14.99) comes out of the heart of Wilson-Hartgrove, co-founder of a neo-monastic community where he lives with his family, a pastor in an inner-city church and a leader in new ways of conversing about Christianity in the 21st century. His life work begins with what stability offers and requires—rootedness.

What a playhouse and church have in common



Peter Epp is moving to Manitoba in mid-August to teach Mennonite Studies at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. He is also a member of Young Adult Fellowship.

They grew up in a Mennonite family in Harrisonburg, Va., where their Grandpa started businesses, prayed with Ronald Reagan and gave them a book called *Capitalism for Kids*. They moved to Portland, Ore.—America's least-churched city—set up shop in a defunct church and put their family-bred business sense to new use. Before long, the church was filling up—one, two, three, sometimes four times a week. Within a year, they found themselves on the cover of the *Willamette Week* and in the arts section of *The Oregonian*.

When I ask Brian—a graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College—about his beliefs, he speaks like a true evangelist: "I'm a fervent believer in salvation. … I believe in miracles. … I believe in transformation and the power of hope."

But Brian isn't talking about religion. Brian and Michael Weaver have founded Portland Playhouse, and they believe in the transformative power of theater. They're also a shining example of one of the hot new trails being blazed by young adults who identify themselves as Mennonite but don't go to church.

The brothers' Mennonite identity gets more than lip service. *Willamette Week* raves about the hospitality they exude—a rarity in arts, where many of us have been trained to feel guilty if we cough or, worse yet, try to unwrap a cough drop. Not at Portland Playhouse. Brian and Michael set you up with cheap popcorn, free beverages and a couch from Craigslist. Brian figures there are a million tiny details that contribute to their hospitality, but it's not even something they had to think about. "And [hospitality]," he states flatly, "is directly linked to being Mennonite. Our background—and this [venue] being a church—are the biggest reasons for it."

Art can come and go, but Mennonite stays. —Michael

Michael's quick to add his own Mennonite values to the list: "The things I appreciate about Mennonite identity? Community, social justice and simple living." The audience seems to have noticed. When they presented August Wilson's *Radio Golf*, a play that examines gentrification in an African-American community, the many cultures of Northeast Portland came in droves. The play and its post-show talkbacks became a starting point for a long-needed discussion about the gentrification happening all around the playhouse.

With their knack for engaging younger audiences, sparking passions and filling seats, why aren't these young Mennonites in the church? While theater provides them with ample community and fulfillment, they also admit that church offers something more "foundational and all-encompassing" than that. "Art can come and go, but Mennonite stays," Michael jokes. So why is he not going to church? "I just don't choose to make it a priority yet," he says.

Still, as they discuss the church, you notice what may contribute to that. Brian and Michael describe a church that doesn't always know what to do with its artists. Art, Brian points out, has two roles in society: to celebrate community and to challenge its conventions and prejudices. The church, he goes on, embraces the celebration but is uncomfortable with the challenge. When he tried to challenge some of the more controversial conventions at Goshen College, for example, he soon concluded that he'd have to choose between being censored and starting a theater off campus. He did the latter, founding the New World Players in the city of Goshen.

Additionally, Brian said he never really felt encouraged to be a professional artist. Mennonites, he found, expect you to give your artistic gifts to the church but steer away from the arts professionally.

Michael sees the same divide from a business angle. When he started looking for donations to help the playhouse, he noticed that his Mennonite community wasn't as quick to designate its charitable giving to artists as to war relief. Even though, he adds, "the arts would be preventative care," building the kind of community and understanding that prevents conflicts.

Brian and Michael represent a trend among Mennonite young adults. Their biggest reason for not going to church is that they don't make it a priority. Their more subtle reasons sound strikingly prophetic. Should the church be doing more to accommodate their insights? Or should these benefactors of Mennonite values be overcoming their church allergy? If you're comfortable with your church right now, you may want to spend some time meditating on the first question. You can even put some time and money into it by visiting portlandplayhouse.org. If you're Brian and Michael (or feeling similarly), I recommend the second question—and remind you that Portland Mennonite Church (or your local equivalent) is just down the road. TM

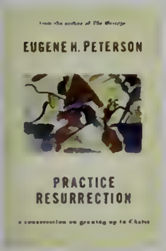
FILM REVIEWS

Toy Story 3 (G) is yet another excellent animated film from Pixar. Woody, Buzz and the rest of their toy-box friends are dumped in a day-care center after their owner, Andy, gets ready to leave for college. While children will love the film, it's equally geared to adults with its moving storyline and its many references to other films and pop culture.—*Gordon Houser*

Please Give (R) is a well-written, well-acted film set in New York City. A husband and wife butt heads with the granddaughters of the elderly woman who lives in an apartment the couple owns. Catherine Keener is outstanding as a guilt-ridden do-gooder who must learn how to love her confused, 15-year-old daughter.—*gh*

Mother and Child (R) follows a successful woman unable to get pregnant and trying to adopt a child, a bitter older woman who gave up her child at age 14, and that same woman's adult daughter, who tries to control everything around her. The film, with its raw acting and dynamic characters, shows that motherhood is complicated regardless of the circumstances.—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS



Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2010, $24) is the fifth and final book in Peterson's series of "conversations" in spiritual theology. Here he brings the voice of Scripture—especially Paul's letter to the Ephesians—and the voice of the contemporary Christian congregation together to unpack what it means to fully grow up "to the stature of Christ." Peterson makes a good case for the importance of church, which he calls "the gift of a community of Christians in which we rehearse and orient ourselves in the practice of resurrection."—*gh*

The sound of time passing

One day in June, as I walked to work, I saw a young mother pushing a stroller with one child, another child beside her and a dog following behind. Meanwhile, she was talking on a cell phone. Three days later, I saw a similar sight in my neighborhood, a mother, stroller, two children and a cell phone.

I'm not attacking mothers, who have enough to do. As I walk, I often see cell phone users, many of them talking on the phone while driving their cars. I understand that the phones are useful, but their ubiquity and the seeming addiction to their use lead me to ask, Where are we heading?

This question came to me again as I read Jennifer Egan's new novel, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (Knopf), particularly her final chapter, which she titles "Pure Language."

There she imagines a future in which young people have no tattoos or piercings, no ethics, no swearing. One character, Lulu, is a "handset employee: paperless, deskless, commuteless, and theoretically omnipresent." Most communication happens through texting, which, Lulu says, is "pure—no philosophy, no metaphors, no judgments." One woman studies "word casings," which are "words that no longer had meaning outside quotation marks." These include "friend" and "real" and "story" and "change."

Egan is an experimental writer who plays with cultural trends, but her storytelling skills keep one reading and caring for each character. She paints realistic scenes that also draw on philosophical questions.

The novel consistently plays with the theme of seeking the real amid the artificial and having to deal with the effects of the passage of time.

One character's "slightly autistic" 12-year-old son is obsessed with rock songs that have pauses in them. One chapter, which consists of PowerPoint slides, has one character say this: "The pause makes you think the song will end. And then the song isn't really over, so you're relieved. But then the song does actually end, because every song ends, obviously, and THAT. TIME. THE. END. IS. FOR. REAL."

The title reflects this theme. A goon is a ruffian hired by racketeers, according to one definition. One character says to another, "Time's a goon" and, "The goon won."

In that final chapter, set in the future, a man tries to recall an afternoon he spent with a woman years before. He listens to the sounds around him in a New York City neighborhood. Behind them is a hum, which he calls "the sound of time passing."

The novel traces that sound in a multitude of enlightening and moving ways and helps us listen for it behind the cacophony of our lives.

The book and what I see while walking raise these questions:

Do we listen to the pauses, to the sound of time passing? Are there spaces in our lives for contemplation? Is that a mere luxury for busy people?

Further, is our obsession with cell phones—or any of a dozen other technologies—hindering our connection with what is real? And what is that?

One character in Egan's novel reflects: "I can't tell if she's actually real, or if she's stopped caring if she's real or not. Or is not caring what makes a person real?"

Our surrounding mediaculture takes us in many directions, providing many diversions, many questions and answers. As we go about our daily lives, seeking to be faithful to the resurrection life Jesus calls us to, how do we navigate that cacophonous culture?

Is time a goon? Or is it merely the arena in which we live? Perhaps that hum is not time passing but the Spirit's voice.

JUNE 2010 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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THESE READERS SUBMITTED ANSWERS

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Alice Berkey, Molalla, Ore.
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Michele Bollman, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Oleta Bollman, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Beth Bontrager, Moundridge, Kan.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
Ellenor Brenneman, Rocky Ford, Colo.
Barbara Burkey, Albany, Ore.
Ed & Carol Burkholder, Elkhart, Ind.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Eldon Christophel, Battle Creek, Mich.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Glenn Cordell, Chambersburg, Pa.
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Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Jeannie Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Grace Freed, Souderton, Pa.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
John Gerlach, Landisville, Pa.
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Rosalie Grove, Elkhart, Ind.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Amy Hershberger, Hesston, Kan.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
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Mary Ina & Sunita Hooley, Bluffton, Ohio
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Adeline R. Huebert, Henderson, Neb.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Willard Hunsberger, Goshen, Ind.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
June Kirkton, Chenoa, Ill.
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Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Frances L. Mast, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Erma Maust, Bay Port, Mich.
Crist Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Joe & Jane Miller, Mount Union, Pa.
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
John Moser, Bluffton, Ohio
Rose Moyer, Deer Creek, Okla.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Elaine Newcomer, West Liberty, Ohio
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Rhoda S. Oberholtzer, Lititz, Pa.
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
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Imogene Plank, La Junta, Colo.
David Ramer, Couderay, Wisc.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
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Isaac & Margaret Tiessen, Pandora, Ohio
Betty Ulrich, Eureka, Ill.
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Bonita Venhuizen, Isle, Minn.
LaNae Waltner, Freeman, S.D.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
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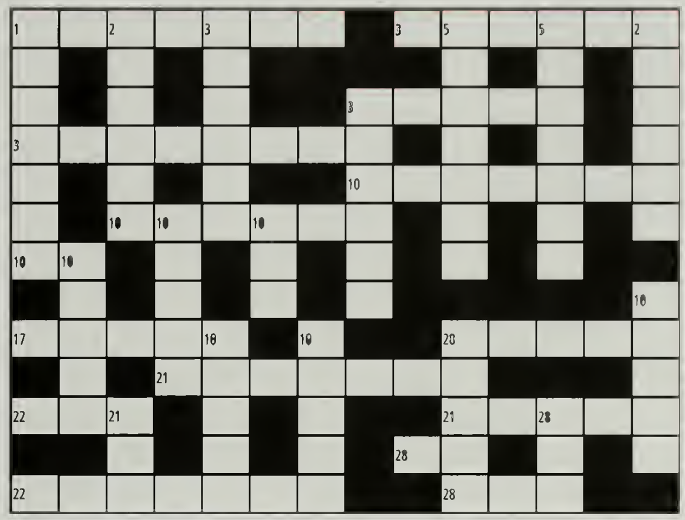
Galen & Esther Yoder, Foraker, Ind.
Marilyn R. Yoder, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Ada J. Yoder, Nappanee, Ind.
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

We have received several notes from puzzlers asking why we place the answers to the current puzzle in the same issue. We do this at the request of readers who pass their copies of *The Mennonite* on to others to read.—*Editor*

Women of the Bible

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. Job's first daughter was born when his prosperity had been restored (Job 42).

4. Zelophehad's youngest daughter; Moses allowed her and her sisters to inherit their father's property (Num. 27).

8. She lived on the city wall of Jericho.

9. Wife of Aaron (Ex.6)

10. She, along with Pudens and Linus, sent greetings to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:21).

11. Wife of Nahor and a daughter of Haran (Gen. 22:20)

14. ___ - Ruhamah, a daughter of Gomer (Hos. 1:6)

17. Caleb's concubine, who was the mother of Haran, Moza and Gazez (1 Chron. 2:46)

20. She was a Midianite princess killed by Phinehas in accordance with God's wishes (Num. 25:15).

21. A wife of David and mother of Adonijah. (1 Chron. 3)

22. In Jeremiah 2:23, the corrupt are compared to a "swift ___-camel running here and there … "

24. In Macedonia, this business woman was converted by Paul and baptized (Acts 16).

26. Ruth told Naomi, "Where you __ I will __, and where you stay I will stay." (one word).

27. She bore Abraham six sons.

28. "The mother of all the living."

DOWN

1. Wicked, idolatrous queen who was trampled by horses and eaten by dogs

2. Aaron's sister

3. Saul's daughter and David's wife (1 Sam. 18)

5. Hagar's son

6. Mother of King Jehoiakim and a wife of King Josiah (2 Kings 23:36)

7. Eli thought she was drunk.

8. Laban's younger daughter

12. Daughter of Haran, niece of Abraham, and sister of Milcah (Gen. 11:29)

13. "I hear a ___ as of a woman in labor … the ___ of the Daughter of Zion gasping for breath … " (one word) (Jer. 4:31).

15. Moabite wife of Kilion, son of Naomi

16. Leah's daughter

18. Egyptian woman who had an angel at a well reveal her son's future

19. A wife of David and mother of Ithream (2 Sam. 3:5)

20. Paul mentions her household as informing him of church dissension (1 Cor. 1).

23. "The woman said to the serpent, 'We may ___ fruit from the trees in the garden … '"

25. Naphtali is compared to this female animal set free (Gen. 49).

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our October 2010 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

September 1, 2010

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

E-MAIL ADDRESS*

Answers to the August puzzle
may be found on page 56.

(Continued from page 5)

job; those people who question their Christian faithfulness are simply perpetuating stereotypes and passing along rumors." That doesn't seem like a good way to start a constructive discussion about Mennonite colleges.

Our Mennonite college leaders have for years been saying publicly that our critics have got it all wrong, while personally and internally they struggle with what to do about teachers whose Christian orthodoxy they know to be questionable. I think a more profitable way to start a genuinely open discussion about our Mennonite colleges would be for our college leaders to be more transparent about controversial interpretations of Christian faith and practice on our campuses, and for them to say that the critical voices they are hearing will be honored and heard, not dismissed as rumormongers.—*Steve Dintaman, Klaipeda, Lithuania*

God's wrath or God's honor?

In his "First Things First" column on the message of the cross (July), Ervin Stutzman states: "Anselm understood Christ's death as a penal substitution—a spiritual transaction by which God vented on Jesus the wrath deserved by others, releasing them of their guilt." Stutzman, however, has cited Calvin's theory and attributed it to Anselm.

An unfortunate aspect of the recent debate over atonement theology among Mennonites has been the tendency to conflate Anselm and Calvin. While sharing some assumptions, their respective theories frame the need for atonement in different terms. Whereas Calvin thinks in terms of a divine requirement to punish sinners to propitiate God's wrath, Anselm thinks in terms of a human obligation to repay honor to God on account of sin. Sin "robs" God of his "due" as Creator and so offends God. What is thus needed is not retribution against human sinners but restitution of God's honor. There is nothing here concerning God's wrath or of God punishing Jesus in our place. Anslem understands the satisfaction made by Christ on our behalf as an alternative to divine punishment. And what satisfies God is Christ's perfect obedience, in life and death.

Anselm's theory, for sure, is not adequate to Paul's message. But conflating Anselm and Calvin obscures two important elements of Anselm's theory that may well be of interest to Mennonites: God's desire is for our whole-lived obedience; and God's justice, although premised on the principle of retribution and accomplished by means of a transaction, has a restorative purpose, to repair the relationship between God and humanity and so restore the order of creation.—*Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, Raleigh, N.C.*

Stutzman responds

Darrin is right, and I am grateful for his properly nuanced interpretation of Anselm's theory. While Anselm's theory required satisfaction for sin, it was Calvin who later theorized that God's punishment of Christ was needed to bring about that satisfaction.—*Ervin Stutzman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Energize, not enervate

I appreciate Ervin Stutzman's monthly column, none more so than the one in the July issue. However, one word changes the meaning of an entire sentence. "Enervate," according to my Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary of 1973, means, "to lessen the vitality or strength of." I think the word Ervin wanted was "energize." I probably caught this right away because it's a common crossword puzzle word, and I am a crossword buff.—*Elvina Martens, Goshen, Ind.*

Editor's note: *We did not discover this mistake until the July issue was mailed. When we contacted Stutzman, he asked us to make the change. We have done so on our website. The sentence now reads, "I look foward to a thorough and spiritually energizing exploration of this matter at the next bienniel convention."*

Can't put God in nonviolent box

I agree with J. Denny Weaver ("The Peace Church as Worship of God," July) that themes of nonviolence and violence are in dynamic engagement within the Old Testament; I would add that the messianic hope proclaimed by the prophets is generally but not always expressed in nonviolent images.

However, I do not believe it possible to put God as revealed in the Old and New Testament into an exclusively nonviolent box. He doesn't fit those confines. It is not only the Old Testament where we meet God ready to exercise violent retribution; a number of the parables of Jesus likewise warn of the judgment of God in sometimes violent images. Jesus is crisp in his warnings against those who persist in their unjust and sinful ways, rejecting the gift of forgiveness and reconciliation. Even in Revelation, where the triumph of the nonviolent, suffering Lamb is the central theme, the wrath of the Lamb who exercises just judgement is also described. In at least one passage the wrath of the Lamb is expressed in violent images (14:9-12).

As I see it, the descriptions of God exercising violence, both in the Old and New testaments, are not centered in God's omnipotence, but rather in the demands of justice. God is just. Therefore, the general thrust of the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, is that we must entrust vengeance to God. Only God knows the heart; only God can effectuate just retribution and bring full restoration.

The peace of the gospel is centered in the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The paradox of the cross is that both the just wrath of God against sin and the rebellion of humanity against God collide upon Jesus, and in the impasse Jesus cries out in forgivness. His wounded, outstretched arms are the inviting, redemptive, reconciling embrace of God for the whole world. That cross-centered reconciliation is the essence of New Testament peace. —*David W. Shenk, Mountville, Pa.*

First things first God first sent apostles

And God has appointed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers …
—1 Corinthians 12:28

Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.—Ephesians 4:11-12 (TNIV)

Joining in God's activity in the world, WE develop and nurture missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures. —Mennonite Church USA Statement of Purpose

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Many Christians assume that the day of apostles is over, that the need for apostolic ministry died along with the original 12 sent by Christ into the world. I choose to differ. As long as there are communities that need the transforming power of God's good news offered through Jesus Christ, there is a need for apostolic ministry.

In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch make a convincing case for the apostolic function, whereby leaders pioneer new missional churches and oversee their development. Further, these authors suggest that congregations need the ministry of prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, just as they did in the apostle Paul's day. Frost and Hirsh believe these five categories of leaders carry out the social functions of entrepreneurs, questioners, communicator/recruiters, humanizers and systematizers. A full-orbed leadership team, including the role of apostle, is needed in order to fully establish new communities of the kingdom.

Seth McCoy, pastor of Third Way Church in St. Paul, Minn., says that their church has "been inspired by Ephesians 4:11 to build a shepherding team of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher to remain in the tension of faithfulness and mission." This new congregation in the Central Plains Mennonite Conference seeks to "disciple and empower contrast communities of peace, justice, sharing, submission, equality, simplicity and agape love to engage in the mission of reconciling all things to God."

Alan Roxburgh, in *Evangelical, Ecumenical and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation* (2006), proposes a paradigm of leadership that contrasts the operating models of a typical pastor with that of a missional pastor who functions in an apostolic way. In *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership and Liminality*, Roxburgh further asserts that "discipling and equipping require a leadership that demonstrates encounter with the culture in action. "This is the role of the apostle," and "pastor, as apostle, is foundational to all other functions," he says.

I pray that we can recapture the missionary spirit of the early church, when Christians were a minority who lived on the margins of the empire. George Hunter in *How to Reach Secular People* (1992) suggests that the "situation we face today is much like what the early apostolic church faced." He shows that these believers (1) faced a population with no knowledge of the gospel, (2) turned the hostile persecution into a positive attitude toward the Christian movement, (3) witnessed to an empire with entrenched religions and (4) invited people to join the messianic community and follow Jesus as Lord.

Starting new churches is one of the primary expressions of apostolic ministry. For this reason, I am heartened to see the renewed interest in church planting within many different cultural groups in Mennonite Church USA. At a recent church planters' retreat sponsored by the mission program of Virginia Mennonite Conference, there were six languages of prayer represented, with people from at least 10 different countries of origin. This same phenomenon is evident in many other areas of our country. See the April issue of *The Mennonite* for a map depicting the locations where new churches are getting started.

The renewal and growth of Mennonite Church USA will depend on our commitment to put first things first—affirming the office of apostolic ministry on which God founded the church. If we hope to move from maintenance to mission, we need apostles who can lead the way. TM

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FROM THE EDITOR

Recalibrating

Everett J. Thomas

From time to time readers will suggest that we need to provide a more independent voice in our reporting and editorializing about Mennonite Church USA. The implication is that *The Mennonite* should function in a "watchdog" role, similar to the secular press.

At times, Mennonite Church USA leaders have wanted us to go in the opposite direction and function more like corporate communication for the Executive Board and churchwide agencies.

We are in that middle ground between independent watchdog and corporate communication. But being in the middle is not a problem to be solved. Rather, it is a dynamic to be managed through good relationships.

A recent Executive Board action just made this middle-ground management easier. The significant changes initiated by this action are the result of conversations that first began in June 2008.

Two years ago, the Executive Board proposed the formation of one board for all the Mennonite Church USA program boards. They also proposed that the governing board for The Mennonite, Inc., become an editorial board—instead of a governing board—and *The Mennonite* the communication arm for this one large board.

We are in that middle ground between independent watchdog and corporate communication for Mennonite Church USA.

While the proposal to form one large board eventually evolved into a less-radical "alignment" for all entities, a task force of six board members—three from the Executive Board and three from our board—worked for more than a year on the issues involved in having *The Mennonite* become the communication arm of the Executive Board. However, at the end of their efforts the task force could not see a way to establish a viable business plan while at the same time meeting the needs of the Executive Board.

Fortunately, through the leadership of Mennonite Church USA executives Ervin Stutzman and Marty Lehman, a new path has been proposed. On June 11, the Executive Board adopted the following changes to the interface between their leadership and our work:

1. Invite *The Mennonite* staff to function as the news bureau for Mennonite Church USA.
2. Invite *The Mennonite* into the center of communication planning and practice so that it can truly function as the official publication of Mennonite Church USA.
3. Ask the editor of *The Mennonite* to meet regularly with the Mennonite Church USA's director of operations for ways to collaborate on communications projects and meet occasionally with the executive director to discuss developments within Mennonite Church USA.
4. Ask *The Mennonite* for a process to publish certain releases in wording specified with visible notations that these documents are "official communications" from Mennonite Church USA.
5. Invite the chair of the board for The Mennonite, Inc., and the editor to become full members of the Governance Council, a group of board chairs and CEOs.
6. Ask the Mennonite Church USA executive director to develop a covenant of accountability between the Executive Board and the board for *The Mennonite*; this will include an agreement for the director of operations to become a voting member of *The Mennonite*'s board of directors.

We, board and staff members, are grateful for this new path forward and appreciate the trust shown in this recalibration of our relationship.

At the same time, we know that it is still a middle-ground dynamic. We are committed to managing these dynamics through healthy and open relationships.—*ejt*

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- Racial healing in the church
- Lead us not into temptation
- Does church publishing matter?
- Editorial: Do we need a new hymnal?

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ON THE COVER: Photo by Everett J. Thomas

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Boycott Arizona?

On decision-making about holding a convention in Arizona in 2013: Everett Thomas' editorial (July) unfortunately lays a parameter of creativity that may predetermine the outcome. I hope the following factors are significantly addressed in the decision-making process: What are the key assumptions, and how accurate are they? What is the ideal outcome? Does the decision include input from all angles? Does the decision deal with causes or symptoms? How does the decision maximize our key strengths and support our overall purpose?

Certainly discernment includes prayer. It led to the original decision to go to Arizona, which raises a question: If the original decision was made with God's leading, do we change it because of a change in circumstances? Too often people are coerced into decisions by group-think, emotionalism and loud, articulate voices claiming to have God's answer. Maybe we need to hear more humble prayers on behalf of our governments, and less sniping might make a difference.*—Phil Bontrager, Berrien Springs, Mich.*

"To go or not to go" identifies an opportunity for Mennonite Church USA to be the community of reconciliation at the core of our Jesus-centered theology. The Phoenix 2013 convention is a dilemma because we are a diverse people. Yvonne Diaz (Editorial, July) makes an excellent suggestion as she asks us to use our creativity to make this a teaching moment for the church. This is an opportunity to (a) share in the lives of our Hispanic brothers and sisters in Arizona, (b) challenge the state on what this law does to us as we follow Christ's call to serve those in need and (c) model how a diverse faith community can experience the Spirit's leading in creative conflict resolution.

When our brothers and sisters are hurting, Christ calls us to surround them with love, understand their situation and engage them in bringing healing and hope to all humanity. Phoenix 2013 is an invitation for us to be the body of Christ, siding with the poor, bringing healing to the world. I trust God's Spirit to guide people who meet to find reconciliation for this situation.

Our theology says it can be done. Can we accept the challenge to make it happen?*—Don Blosser, Goshen, Ind.*

Love, sex and marriage

Thanks for publishing Sandra Fribley's timely article "Love, Sex and Marriage" (July). Without condoning cohabitation in any way, what if congregations respectfully confronted couples who are living together as having already entered into a marital bond, as follows:

"Whenever you (a) 'leave father and mother' (form a separate social unit and become publicly recognized partners), (b) 'cleave to each other' (are an exclusive couple committed to fidelity) and (c) 'become one flesh' (are sexually intimate), we will hold you to the same standard of lifelong faithfulness we expect of legally married couples.

"While the Genesis 2:24 text quoted by both Jesus and Paul predates mandates like a marriage license or a ceremony, we nevertheless believe you should take the step of registering and solemnizing the de facto ('common law') marriage you have entered into.

"We understand you might see this step as a mere formality involving 'just a piece of paper,' but we consider it at least as important as having a baptismal certificate, a passport, a vehicle registration or a deed to a new house. But whether documented or not, we see your joining together in the manner described above as a profound and emotionally bonding form of 'marriage.' And were you to terminate your undocumented union, we would consider it a de facto divorce. We pray you will choose to have your union blessed by God and by a caring community of believers and so will be able to celebrate a truly joyful and faithful life until 'death do you part.' "—*Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Sandra Fribley's cover article, "Love, Sex and Marriage" (July), was creatively and provocatively written. Although the article was well researched and cited numerous books and published studies, one book was conspicuously absent—the Bible. Why is that?—*Micah Shristi, Kathmandu, Nepal*

A prisoner says thanks

I observed that my prisoner subscription has been renewed. It is appropriate to say thank you (Luke 17:11 and following). But I do not know to whom. Please pass on my thank you to whomever it deservedly goes.

Additionally, the redesign is really good. It maintains interest, has eye appeal, excellent content and flow. The articles have always been good. It is head and shoulders above some of the major well-known religious publications I have seen in the past. Keep on keeping on.—*Robert J. Zani, Tennessee Colony, Texas*

Editor's note: *Readers who wish to contribute to the fund that pays for subscriptions for prisoners can do so by designating the contribution for the Prisoners Fund.*

Need a Mennonite name?

Religious beliefs are an essential criterion in evaluating any candidate for leadership in a church institution. But I am disturbed by the insinuations of Karla Morton's letter (August) lamenting that the announcement of Bethel College's new president did not include any description of his church involvements. Religious resumés have not been standard in news reports of new college presidents—and that apparently has never generated concerns such as Morton's. So why is Perry White suspect?

Is his faith open to question because he doesn't have a "Mennonite" last name? If so, that is an extraordinarily offensive reason. The church has been greatly blessed by people named Guyton, Hinojosa, Risingsun, Teng, even Morton, as well as others who are not of some idealized and idolized ethnicity. Furthermore, even having a "Mennonite" last name doesn't necessarily mean having Mennonite beliefs.

Is it because White's academic career has been in schools that are not Mennonite-affiliated? There are countless Mennonites working in colleges and universities of other denominations. There are also countless people in other denominations who may not be members of a Mennonite congregation but have beliefs fully compatible with ours.

Does Morton believe the Bethel board ignored White's faith in selecting him as president? I'm an undeniable and unrepentant "glass half-empty" person, and even I'm not so cynical to think that the school would pick a leader whose beliefs are inappropriate for a Mennonite college. Assuming White's religious beliefs fit with Bethel, I'm

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

September marks the beginning of the Sunday school—or Christian education—year for many congregations. That means a new curriculum. But Ron Rempel, executive director for Mennonite Publishing Network, asks, "Does church publishing matter?" (Leadership, page 34) as we consider spiritual formation needs in our congregations.

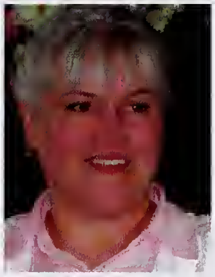
Our cover story features a leader who, perhaps more than any other Mennonite, has thought and taught about spiritual formation and education. Marlene Kropf (page 12) began her career as a high school English teacher but spent the last 27 years helping congregations think about worship and spiritual formation. She retires this month from her position as denominational minister of worship.

We also provide two special theme sections: one on child safety (page 18) and a second on dismantling racism in the church (page 26). To help our readers understand the language often used in conversations, we publish—for the first time—the continuum used by many trained in Damascus Road's antiracism work. Glen Guyton is generous when he says, "Mennonite Church USA probably falls somewhere in the middle."

In this issue we also publish Sara Wenger Shenk's last Real Families column, as she has now moved into her role as president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Returning to Rempel's question: In addition to curriculum, hymnals are an important part of MPN's ministry. After reading the editorial (page 64), we invite you to vote through our website poll in response to the question, "Should MPN plan now for a new hymnal by 2016?"—*Editor*

Living a life of gratitude



Donna Mast serves half-time as a pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church and half-time as interim conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

This summer our congregation is focusing on the book of Philippians. We are paying special attention to the ways Paul was calling the church at Philippi—and us—to a life of joy. This is especially notable, considering he was writing from prison and not knowing if he faced more of this earthly life or life eternal. Reading and rereading Paul's letter to the Philippians is a good way to spend the summer.

Each Sunday morning we begin with Paul's words to rejoice in the Lord, to not be anxious, but instead, through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, to bring every situation to God, and the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7) We are sent out with Paul's encouragement to think about the good and positive things of life, live the way Paul has taught us to live, then promised that the God of peace will be with us (4:8-9). Paul is not glossing over the hard or discouraging things of life. His situation was anything but rosy. Paul is telling us that there are better things for us to focus on. Life is hard, but God is good. Focus on the good things of God.

If we choose to focus on the negatives of this world, there are certainly plenty to capture our attention. This was true for Paul, and it is true today. There are times in our lives when it seems impossible to find anything good, let alone focus on it. Paul knew the hardness of life. But he also knew the joy of forgiveness by and relationship with Jesus. This was his focus. He practiced a life of gratitude out of his relationship with Jesus.

If we choose to focus on the negatives of this world, there are plenty to capture our attention.

Practice is the key. If we concentrate on noticing the goodness of God, we will begin to see the positive things God provides, even while we live in the midst of difficult times. If we nurture this way of living when times are good, it is easier to find the good when times are difficult.

A basketball player shoots hoops over and over so that when the time comes for a free-throw, not only the player's mind but the body will have memorized what it takes to send the ball through the hoop. A piano player plays a piece of music over and over until the music is not only in the mind but in the fingers of the pianist.

So it is in developing an attitude. We practice until it becomes automatic. If we practice negativity, a pessimistic outlook on life will be the result. Paul tells us there is a better way to live our lives—a life of gratitude leads to a joyful and positive outlook on life.

As I write, it is easy for me to be grateful. I am writing during a family vacation. My sister was given a week's vacation at a three-storied chalet in Tennessee. She invited my parents, siblings and families to join her for the week. I am grateful.

I am grateful for a family that loves each other and wants to be together. I am grateful for a family that is willing to set aside differences of opinion about how the world should be run and to respect one another. I am grateful that my parents are still alive and healthy enough to join us in this place of beauty. I am grateful for the cheerful energy, confident trust and absolute adorableness of my nephews, as well as the discipline and security their parents are instilling in them.

Yesterday we took a long hike. It was more difficult than the guidebook had indicated. I am grateful for my legs and feet that carried me safely over the rocks. I am grateful for a healthy heart that insisted on beating as I trudged up the path. And I am grateful for the sight of the waterfall and the coolness of the moist breeze that was our destination point on the hike.

The day before, we went to an aquarium in Gatlinburg. I saw sea creatures I didn't even know existed. What variety! And this variety is not limited to life under the sea. The varieties of plant life, birds, animals, people and scenery is amazing. I am grateful for the night sounds of the insects and the morning sounds of the local hawk. I am grateful for the many tastes of the great food we've been eating together. And I am grateful for the incredible imagination of our Creator, who made all this possible.

Most of all, I am grateful for this Creator God who desires relationship with us—wants relationship so much that Jesus came to show us the face of God. What are you grateful for today? If you are like me, you can begin a list, but you won't finish it, because as you practice gratitude, it will grow. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice.

Provision

By Tania Runyan

To those who proclaim
that God helps those
who help themselves,

who believe that the hungry
slouch through the streets
with their bootstraps hanging
loose around their ankles,

who see Jesus whipping
immigrants out of the temple
and writhing on the cross
so the rich can keep
more of their gold,

consider Leviticus 19,
which commands the farmers
to leave the margins
of their fields unplowed

and to leave the grapes
that have fallen in the vineyard
during harvest

so that the poor can come
and gather them
at the end of the day,
alone with their God,
consumed by that sweet, red fire.

Tania Runyan lives in Lindenhurst, Ill.

2015 MWC Assembly may be in Pennsylvania

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia—The executive committee of Mennonite World Conference, meeting here from July 28 through Aug. 4, unanimously stated a preference for holding the next MWC Assembly in Pennsylvania in 2015. The committee also unanimously decided to consider Indonesia as the alternate choice for 2015—if plans for the United States do not work out—and as the first choice for the site of the 2021 assembly.

"We need two items in order to move forward with the USA as the location for our next global gathering," said Larry Miller, MWC general secretary. "We need to discuss with the MWC member churches in the USA whether they desire to host the next assembly. And, if they do, we need to do a feasibility study of the site they propose."

U.S. member churches invited the 2009 Assembly to be held in eastern Pennsylvania. MWC instead accepted an invitation from the Paraguayan member churches.—*MWC*

Newton office won't close

GOSHEN, Ind.—Contrary to rumors sparked by a consultant's recommendation, the Mennonite Church USA offices at 722 Main Street in Newton, Kan., will not be closed in the foreseeable future.

"By 2011, the denomination should designate only one location as its official headquarters," wrote LaVerne Yutzy in his Jan. 12 report to the Executive Board.

"The Yutzy recommendation said we should use the Elkhart office as headquarters [for Mennonite Church USA]," says Marty Lehman, Mennonite Church USA's director of operations, "but we will continue to have multiple offices."

Open houses are tentatively planned for the Newton office on Oct. 11 and 12. Currently 35 denominational staff members work in the Newton office.
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Four CPTers arrested

CHICAGO—Chicago police arrested four members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) July 19 on charges of trespass for praying inside The Body Shop during a noon-hour vigil at the downtown store. The Body Shop purchases palm oil from Daabon Organics, a Colombian company involved in the forced eviction of 123 families from their ancestral lands in Las Pavas, Colombia. The four sat down by the door, near products that contain Colombian palm oil, where they prayed, sang and broke bread together until police arrested them 40 minutes later. All were released that night and will be arraigned on Aug. 31. Participants in CPT's peacemaker training organized the witness. Those arrested were Marcus Armstrong, Lor Breyley, Jo Ann Fricke and Carol Rose, CPT co-director.—*CPT*

Liesa Unger

Reconciliaton with Lutherans

During a Lutheran-Mennonite service of reconciliation on July 22 in Stuttgart, Germany, Larry Miller, Mennonite World Conference general secretary, presented an image of Anabaptist Dirk Willems rescuing his pursuer who had fallen through the ice. Miller said, "Such stories have sometimes led Anabaptist-Mennonites to adopt the martyr tradition as a 'badge of superiority.'"—*MWC*

Bridgefolk conference explores footwashing

COLLEGEVILLE, Minn.—A voluntary group of North American Mennonites and Catholics met July 22-25 in Collegeville, Minn., for conversations about the faith which unites them—and the issues which divide them. This was the ninth consecutive year the group has met. The Benedictine community at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville hosted the gathering, as it has six previous ones.

This year's topic was the practice of foot washing, which has emerged in previous conferences as a common practice that both groups have traditionally shared and that participants in the Bridgefolk movement have found they can share despite the divisions that still exist between the two communities.—*Bridgefolk*

New curriculum on sex

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Sex is everywhere—the media, movies, books, ads, the Internet. It's also in the Bible, which talks about how we are created male and female in God's image and encouraged to "be fruitful and multiply." But sexuality is hard to talk about in church. The goal of *Body and Soul: Healthy Sexuality and the People of God*, a new four-session study and worship resource from Faith & Life Resources, is to help adults, youth and families find ways to talk about this important subject in the context of Christian community. Topics include our bodies and how we see them, the need for intimacy and the place of sexual expression. *Body and Soul* is available at www.mpn.net/bodyandsoul.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

Blog created for young adults

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Two alumni of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg have created a blog and quarterly web magazine to provide a forum for young adults who are committed to staying in the institutional church but want to discuss what that means.

Norristown church celebrates 20th anniversary

Emily and Emmanuel Mwaipopo dedicated their daughter Kianna at the Nueva Vida Norristown (Pa.) New Life Mennonite Church's 20th anniversary July 17-18. In July 1990, NVNNL was formed by the joining of three "legacy" Mennonite congregations in town—Fuente de Salvación, Bethel and First. An offering for the multifaceted capital campaign, Enlarging Our Place in God's World, was received.—*NVNNL*

"Work and Hope: Finding Christ in the Church" (www.emu.edu/blog/work-and-hope) was created by Jeremy Yoder, a 2010 graduate currently living in Baltimore, Md., and Laura Lehman Amstutz, a 2006 alumna, a Harrisonburg resident. The first issue of the magazine was launched July 20 and focused on the theme "Why am I [still] Mennonite?"—*EMS*

Goshen offers domestic Study-Service Term

GOSHEN, Ind.—This summer, four Goshen College students participated in the first Latino Studies Semester in Northern Indiana, the first domestic SST location. Ana Juarez, director, said that all four students grew up around Goshen, and this is "changing their perspectives on their community, even though it is the same place." See http://latino-sst.b.goshen.edu/ for web updates and photos.—*Goshen College*

Bluffton launches new MBA program

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Starting this fall, Bluffton University will offer evening classes in social work and a new health-care management concentration for its traditional master in business administration program (MBA).

Bluffton's MBA with a concentration in health-care management will help health-care professionals become familiar with new trends, regulations and state-of-the-art management techniques. Classes will be held one evening per week. The two-year MBA program will develop a general set of management skills in a variety of areas, while the concentration will focus on health-care management practices through specialized elective courses such as Health Care Financial Management, The Health Care Environment and Health Care Informatics.—*Bluffton University*

Minneapolis church responds to triple murder

MINNEAPOLIS—Donna Minter, a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, had a passion for discovering how restorative justice and peace building could play a role in healing from trauma. When a triple murder occurred in a Somali-immigrant-owned business several blocks from FMC in January, the need felt all the more urgent. With the support and guidance of FMC's Missions and Service Commission, Minter organized a four-day workshop called Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) that was developed at Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding-Practice Institute. This multicultural, multireligious event was held on the campus of neighboring Augsburg College June 23-27. Elaine Zook Barge, STAR's program director, facilitated the workshop with Minter's assistance. For more information see www.emu.edu/cjp/pti/star/.—*Faith Mennonite Church*

Changes on horizon for London Mennonite Centre

LONDON—The London Mennonite Centre has been a stopping point and a place of hospitality for Mennonites in London since it opened in 1953. Now, after 57 years, the property is for sale.

In a meeting on June 14, trustees of the Centre decided that selling the house was in the best financial interest of the local Anabaptist community. But the decision to sell grew from a larger process of revisioning and goal-setting that will support current work and move the community into a new era.

The discernment process revealed a strong commitment to Anabaptist values and a continuing desire to be an Anabaptist witness in the United Kingdom and provide a place of hospitality, even if it's not in the current space.

The trustees have made the decision to remain in London while seeking space that's more accessible and adaptable.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Many polls on public views of global warming are innacurate

National surveys released during the last eight months have been interpreted as showing that fewer and fewer Americans believe that climate change is real, human-caused and threatening to people.

But a closer look at these polls and a new survey by his Political Psychology Research Group show just the opposite, writes Jon A. Krosnick, professor of communication, political science and psychology at Stanford, a *New York Times* piece June 8. "Huge majorities of Americans still believe the earth has been gradually warming as the result of human activity and want the government to institute regulations to stop it," Krosnick writes.

In the survey, 1,000 randomly selected American adults were interviewed by phone between June 1 and 7. When respondents were asked if they thought that the earth's temperature probably had been heating up over the last 100 years, 74 percent answered affirmatively. And 75 percent of respondents said that human behavior was substantially responsible for any warming that has occurred.

"For many issues, any such consensus about the existence of a problem quickly falls apart when the conversation turns to carrying out specific solutions that will be costly," he writes, "but not so here."

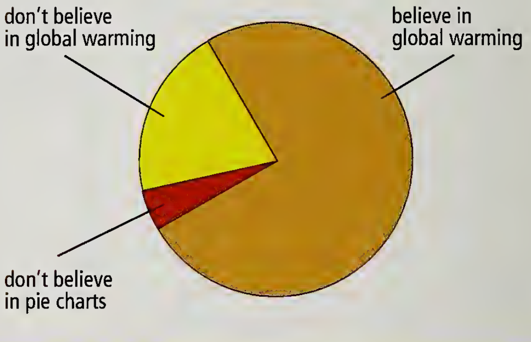
Fully 86 percent of the respondents said they wanted the federal government to limit the amount of air pollution businesses emit, and 76 percent wanted the government to limit business's emissions of greenhouse gases in particular.

"Large majorities opposed taxes on electricity (78 percent) and gasoline (72 percent) to reduce consumption," Krosnick writes, "but 84 percent favored the federal government offering tax breaks to encourage utilities to make more electricity from water, wind and solar power. And huge majorities favored government requiring, or offering tax breaks to encourage, each of the following: manufacturing cars that use less gasoline (81 percent), manufacturing appliances that use less electricity (80 percent) and building homes and office buildings that require less energy to heat and cool (80 percent)."

What about arguments against remedial efforts? Krosnick reports that only 18 percent of respondents said they thought policies to reduce global warming would increase unemployment, and only 20 percent said they thought these would hurt the nation's economy. And only 14 percent said the United States should not take action to combat global warming unless other major industrial countries like China and India do so as well.

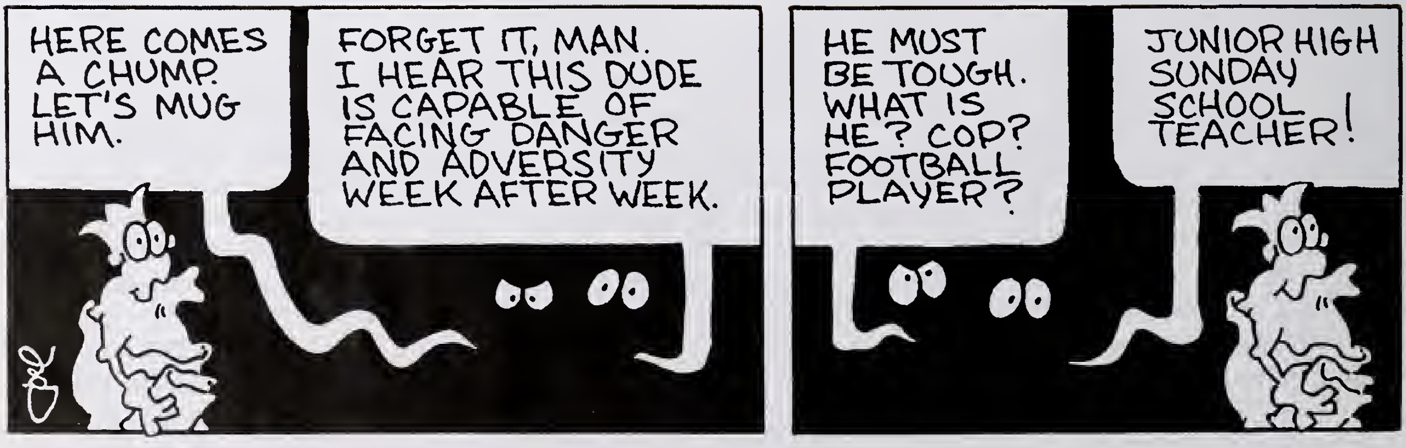
What about those other polls that showed people's scepticism about global warming? Krosnick writes: "Questions in other polls that sought to tap respondents' personal beliefs about the existence and causes of warming violated two of the cardinal rules of good survey question design: ask about only one thing at a time, and choose language that makes it easy for respondents to understand and answer each question."

Krosnick concludes: "Even as we are told that Americans are about equally divided into red and blue, a huge majority shares a common vision of climate change," and 72 percent think most business leaders do not want the government to take steps to stop global warming.



Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


HERE COMES A CHUMP. LET'S MUG HIM.
FORGET IT, MAN. I HEAR THIS DUDE IS CAPABLE OF FACING DANGER AND ADVERSITY WEEK AFTER WEEK.
HE MUST BE TOUGH. WHAT IS HE? COP? FOOTBALL PLAYER?
JUNIOR HIGH SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER!

—compiled by Gordon Houser

> “The most significant export the [United States] contributes to the wider world is not McDonald’s or popular TV shows. It is a sweeping set of cultural instructions on how to live, whether sanely or insanely.”
>
> *—David Augsburger in* The Christian Century

Hymn Society meets in Alabama

Hymns, praise music, Negro spirituals, Christian rock, sacred harp and Gregorian chant may seem like starkly different styles with little in common, but they share one thing: They can all be heard in churches across the United States. That’s what brought about 220 Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Mennonites and dozens from other denominations together for a five-day meeting of the Hymn Society, which ended July 15 at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.—*Religion News Service*

Water in your wine

- number of gallons of water to brew a gallon of beer: 7
- number of gallons of water to brew a gallon of wine: 17

—The Marketplace

Does Twitter affect our brain?

According to Steven Pinker, “Experience does not revamp the basic information-processing capacities of the brain. Speed-reading programs have long claimed to do just that, but the verdict was rendered by Woody Allen after he read *War and Peace* in one sitting: “It was about Russia.” Genuine multitasking, too, has been exposed as a myth. … Moreover, as the psychologists Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons show in their new book *The Invisible Gorilla: And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us*, the effects of experience are highly specific to the experiences themselves. If you train people to do one thing (recognize shapes, solve math puzzles, find hidden words), they get better at doing that thing but almost nothing else. Music doesn’t make you better at math, conjugating Latin doesn’t make you more logical, brain-training games don’t make you smarter. Accomplished people don’t bulk up their brains with intellectual calisthenics; they immerse themselves in their fields.”—*New York Times*

Industrial waste

- Estimated cost of the environmental damage caused each year by the world’s 3,000 largest companies: $2.2 trillion
- Portion of the companies’ total profits this represents: 1/3
- Number of industrial facilities found by the EPA to have been in continuous violation of the Clean Air Act since 2007: 2,000

—Harper’s

Origins of Monopoly

New research traces the origins of the board game Monopoly to the political activism of Elizabeth Magie, a Virginia Quaker. She invented a more complicated version called The Landlord’s Game to teach people the evils of land monopolism. It eventually morphed into today’s Monopoly, reputed to be the world’s most popular game.—*The Marketplace*

8 ways to save on gas mileage

1. **Start earlier.** Starting just five minutes earlier means you’re less likely to speed on the way to work, soccer or your hair appointment.
2. **Avoid drive times.** My work day usually starts at 9 a.m. When I made it to work at 8:30 or 8:45 a.m., I missed an average of five long waits at red lights.
3. **I’m not Evel Knievel.** Don’t pay for the thrill of driving like a maniac. According to the EPA, jackrabbit starts and sudden braking use more gas than driving at top speeds.
4. **Turn it off.** Your mileage is negative when you idle for more than one minute. Turn off the engine at railroad tracks and the drive-up bank.
5. **Skip long warmups.** Modern vehicles have automatic chokes, so you don’t need to step on the gas pedal before starting the engine. Most cars need only 30 seconds to warm up. In cold weather just drive slowly until the engine reaches proper operating temperature.
6. **Premium myths.** If your owner’s manual doesn’t say “Premium Unleaded Only,” don’t use premium fuel and save 20 to 40 cents a gallon. (If it does call for 91 octane, however, you have to use it or hear that irritating pinging sound.)
7. **Overdrive: There for a reason.** My manual transmission’s default setting is “Overdrive Off,” but I learned I could save gas by using overdrive for speeds over 30 to 40 mph.
8. **Because it’s there?** Accelerating when driving uphill uses up enormous amounts of gas and taxes your engine. If your car has an instantaneous-gas-mileage display, watch your mileage plummet when you floor it on an incline.—*Kate Forgach, www.freeshipping.org/blog*

As a 30-something high school English teacher in the late 1970s, Marlene Kropf had a revelation during a Sunday morning worship service that changed the trajectory of her ▶

Minister of worship

By Everett J. Thomas

Marlene Kropf teaching a class at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., on July 16. Kropf will continue to teach at AMBS through the 2010-2011 school year.

Marlene Kropf, denominational minister of worship, retires this month after 27 years of promoting worship and spiritual formation.

life. During the last three decades, it has also changed worship practices in Mennonite congregations.

"One morning at Portland Mennonite Church," she says, "I thought, If this were my classroom, I would be worried. It felt like worship was way too passive for so many people. Everything was happening up front. That's where my interest in renewing worship began."

While other young adults may have come to the same conclusions in their Sunday morning worship services and done nothing about it, Marlene took action. Looking for ways to renew congregational worship, she first visited other congregations. But it was a 1977 trip to Woodland Park, Colo., to visit the Fisherfolk community that she and some friends found a place to start.

"They were doing the liturgical-charismatic Episcopal liturgy and interesting things with music and drama," Marlene says.

After returning to Portland, she helped start a Sunday evening service that drew from liturgical and charismatic streams combined with Anabaptist traditions.

"We began with vesper services during Advent, with a lot of experimental things," Marlene says. "We started inviting unchurched friends to vespers. By the end of the year there were about as many people attending as in the morning service. That created tension. I learned some things about dealing with conflict."

During those young adult years, Marlene was also given leadership opportunities in the (former) Pacific Coast Conference. Through her conference involvement, Marlene was invited to be part of a silent retreat sponsored by the national Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) and led by Mary Herr.

"Something happened that weekend that renewed my relationship with God," Marlene says. "As we prayed the Scriptures, I heard a personal hearing of God's voice. Mary said, 'Go home and pray the Scriptures for six months before you talk about it with anybody.' So I did. This personal hearing of God's voice was happening over and over again."

Marlene eventually began telling people about her experience. A neighborhood group asked her to take them on a retreat, teaching them what she had learned. Not all members of the group were Christians, but they practiced contemplative prayer. Soon members of the congregation were interested, and she and her pastor, Marcus Smucker, began leading retreats together.

Marlene is rooted in Oregon. So how did she end up in Elkhart, Ind., in 1983? "I came to Indiana because my experience of God was outstripping my theological foundation," she says.

Marlene first said no to a 1983 invitation to join the staff at the (now defunct) Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries (MBCM). Several months later she realized she had made the wrong decision. The half-time position was still open, and she could begin taking classes at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart.

In the meantime, Stanley, her husband, had been invited to serve as the Mennonite Church's finance secretary. So Marlene and her two young children moved to Elkhart in August 1983, while Stanley stayed in Portland to sell their house and his business. Both sold within six weeks; Stanley moved to Elkhart in October.

> I came to Indiana because my experience of God was outstripping my theological foundation.
> —Marlene Kropf

Because AMBS had almost no courses in worship or spiritual formation, Marlene was able to take the classes she needed at Notre Dame (Ind.) University and have the credits transferred to AMBS. She finished her degree in 1988.

"I felt like I had received the gifts I needed most," she says.

Since 1983, Marlene has been a key leader in the creation of Mennonite worship resources and spiritual formation material and has helped lead six spiritual pilgrimages and numerous music and worship retreat weekends. She has introduced a variety of spiritual disciplines across the church. "The main focus of my interest in worship transformation," Marlene says, "has not simply been a conversion from passive to active behavior in worship but rather toward a more active encounter with God."

At the end of September, Marlene will retire from her work with Mennonite Church USA. She plans to teach one more year at AMBS, or perhaps longer, until they sell their Elkhart house. ▶

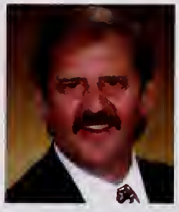
Marlene with lunch in her and Stanley's sailboat on Lake Michigan Photo provided

Then she and Stanley will move back to the Northwest. Several years ago they purchased a building lot in Port Townsend, Wash.; their cottage plans are drawn and waiting to be built.

"I needed some sense of personal call to this stage of life and this new place," Marlene says. "After we visited churches in Port Townsend, I sensed a call to be a Mennonite where there are no Mennonites. The Mennonite church has known me as a public figure for several decades. [In Port Townsend] I will get to discover and experience the church in that place as an ordinary, interested lay member. We do expect to attend and be members of either Seattle Mennonite Church or Portland Mennonite Church. But we will find a local church home in Port Townsend."

Marlene says she and Stanley researched "the rule of life" that can shape daily activity during their retirement years. The rule includes work, prayer, leisure and service.

"After such a structured life for so many years," she says, "it will feel good to live life as it comes. There is a need to discover who you have become through the work you do. Hopefully, who I am is more than my work."



Everett J. Thomas is editor of The Mennonite.

A new menu for Communion

It was a cool Sunday morning in the mountains of Venezuela. The congregation had gathered to worship, and it was Communion Sunday. The leaders of worship were preparing to serve Communion. The bread was ready, but where was the juice? Everyone looked around. No juice anywhere. Someone was sent searching, and still no juice could be found. Then one of the servers had an idea. Weren't there some packages of powdered Jello in the kitchen cupboards?

Yes, there were. All they had to do was mix the jello with water and, voila, Communion juice.

So the preparations were completed; juice was poured in a pitcher, and bread was set out in a basket.

The service began. The congregation sang and sang. They prayed and prayed some more. The preacher preached and preached. And then finally it was time for Communion.

The presider spoke the words of institution, blessed the bread and broke it, lifted the pitcher to pour the juice into a goblet—but nothing came. The presider tried again, but still no juice. The presider shook the pitcher and discovered, to his horror, that the jello-flavored drink had already set. There would be no drinking that day.

So this became the Sunday when the congregation partook of bread and Jello for Communion.—*Marlene Kropf, from a story told by a former AMBS student*

Q&A with Marlene Kropf

When you began, what needs in Mennonite worship patterns and spiritual formation did you want to address?

The central need I discerned was the lack of a direct encounter with God. There was too little Scripture and too little prayer in corporate worship. We were content to talk about God and reluctant to encounter God personally and corporately. Though we loved to sing, we didn't realize that singing is more than a horizontal, community-building experience; it is our most significant way of praying together. The absence of the arts in worship kept many doors closed to encounter with God. Our fear of ritual kept other doors closed. We were far too dependent upon words. Too much of the action was centered on the front, and too little of it directly engaged people in the pews.

We were not teaching people to pray. Neither were we offering an adequate path of spiritual formation—an intentional, sustained process for growing our faith in the midst of a secular, postmodern world. Young people were growing up without hearing and knowing the voice of God, personally and in corporate worship or witness. Adults lacked structures for relationships and accountability, such as spiritual friendship, effective small groups or spiritual direction.

All these needs required a careful look at the church's traditions of worship and spiritual formation—patterns and practices that went back to the early church. We also needed to assess how other churches were nurturing a livelier awareness of God. What paths were bringing new life?

What needs to be addressed now?

What has changed dramatically since I began my work in 1983 is an increased openness to the world of the Spirit. We're no longer afraid to anoint one another and pray for healing; we come to the Lord's Table more often; we can create rituals for joyful occasions or times of lament and sorrow when we need them; we can even dance. We've lost our fear of sacraments and are ready to acknowledge that God works and speaks in material ways, in words, silence, relationships, symbols, mystery—in fact, in any way God chooses.

What we need to do now is take our worship into the world. We have enormous and precious gifts in our tradition that the world around us is hungry for, but we haven't discovered or received the freedom to offer those treasures beyond ourselves. Our singing, stories and prayers, rituals of healing, and the bounty of the Lord's Table belong in the world as well as in worship.

What have been the greatest changes in Mennonite worship and spiritual formation during your tenure?

A major change has been the advent of more variety in Mennonite worship and spiritual formation. We have borrowed freely from other traditions—charismatic, evangelical, liturgical and other free church resources. Sometimes we've discerned and chosen wisely; at other times we've been less discriminating.

We use more Scripture today in our worship, perhaps from the influence of the Revised Common Lectionary. We're more attentive to the seasons of the Christian year and are telling the Jesus story in more creative and substantial ways. We've enlarged the role of praise and confession in worship, largely because of the way these acts of worship have been ordered in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* but also because we've discovered a deeper need to recognize and name who God is and who we are in worship. The altar call of past generations has been transformed into a variety of rituals of response. We're more emotionally expressive in many congregations, though emotion is still suspect in some places. In many congregations, the arts—especially music, drama, dance

Marlene and Stanley on the 2010 Celtic Pilgrimage standing in the nunnery ruins at Iona in Scotland (celebrating their 46th anniversary) Photo provided and the visual arts, have a far more central role.

One significant change in worship is the shift from male-led to female-led worship in many congregations and conferences. When I first began leading public worship, I was often the only woman involved, except for the children's leader. These days I have to make sure there are enough men involved. Men tell me they don't feel as comfortable leading worship when creativity and spirituality seem to be required.

During my tenure as denominational minister of worship, we've lived through the "worship wars," which were basically power struggles or disagreements about musical taste. Thankfully many congregations have quit fighting and are finding their way to more creative solutions. Our two hymnal supplements, *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*, have helped with their remarkable variety of styles, which helps congregations sing whatever helps them express their faith and worship God "in spirit and in truth."

Ken Nafziger and Marlene Kropf at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., in January 2009 at the annual Music and Worship Leaders Weekend. Photo by Brian Paff

What are your greatest achievements through your denominational assignments?

Three things stand out as pivotal, but none was my work alone. First was the development of what came to be called the Congregational Discipling Vision, an organic way of looking at the church as a worshiping community of disciples in mission. Its Trinitarian focus was the center of everything I did.

Second was the resounding success of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and the two supplements that followed, as well as the extensive use of churchwide worship resources published first in *Builder*, then in *Leader* magazine. The resources we use in common do more than bind us together in the present; they also create a vision that will shape who we become in the future.

Third is the expanding network of spiritual directors who now serve the church. Twenty-five years ago we could count on one hand the number of trained spiritual directors in the Mennonite church. Now there are probably close to 200. And while their one-with-one ministry is significant, even more important is the way spiritual direction has renewed the spiritual life of the church. Church councils, committees and groups like the Executive Board now pause to "dwell in the Word" or practice various forms of prayer as they engage their work. The separation between work and worship has diminished.

What have been disappointments?

I don't leave my work with a sense of disappointment but with gratitude. There have been times of discouragement, but the generous people I've worked with and the vision that has guided us have been stronger than any defeats on the way.

One disappointment is that I could not do more. I had hoped for a team of area conference leaders who would care for leadership training in worship, music and spirituality.

Will someone pick up this work?

Not in an office known as Denominational Minister of Worship. But during the past seven years, I've worked hard to train and mentor people to carry on specific tasks—such as overseeing the development of worship resources for *Leader* magazine, creating hymnals or providing support for spiritual directors. That work will continue, but there will be no one to answer the many calls of pastors and worship and music leaders who want to talk to a trusted leader about their questions and concerns.

How have you balanced your passion for the work with a contemplative life?

It's difficult not to keep saying yes when you love the work and there's so much to be done. And unfortunately, women feel pressure to work harder and better than men.

Several key practices have sustained me: a congregational small group I meet with weekly that nurtures and challenges my faith; a spiritual friendship that has endured for more than 20 years; a regular meeting with a spiritual director with whom I can be candid and who holds me in love and prayer; the ongoing Sunday worship of Belmont Mennonite Church.

Also I've been drawn to centering prayer in recent years and find this wordless way of praying a path to clarity and peace. I take regular retreats—a day and a night at a nearby retreat center, where I sink into God's presence and find myself loved, healed and renewed.

Perhaps the most important balance has been my spouse, who loves to sail and persuades me to go along and who cooks such extraordinary food that anyone would be a fool not to stop and savor the good gifts of the earth every morning and night. When we pray together at mealtime from our Celtic prayer book, the tensions from my work world recede, and all is well.

Has the dialogue with Catholics enriched Mennonite worship life?

I had no idea such a rich friendship would develop among Mennonites and Catholics in Bridgefolk. Though this grassroots 10-year friendship hasn't been without pain, the gifts have far outweighed the challenges and difficulties. From Catholics we've learned so much about the sacramental life—prayer and ritual. But Catholics also long for the life of community, discipleship and peacemaking that Mennonites take for granted. Our friendship brings Catholics and Mennonites closer to Christ, which is what really matters.

Has your leadership been of value primarily to white congregations?

It's likely true that resources such as hymnals and supplements as well as worship ideas in *Leader* magazine are used more often by white congregations. Many racial/ethnic congregations are less tied to the mainstream of Mennonite worship or to paper resources in worship. However, we always invite racial/ethnic leaders to participate in resource development projects and find their perspectives challenging and enriching.

I'm impressed with what happens when a resource, such as the Minister's Manual, is translated into Spanish and then taught and promoted by Hispanic leaders. It takes bridge-builders like Gilberto Flores (and others) who can interpret the importance of such a common resource and train people to use it who make a difference in whether or not the whole church uses a resource.

You worked with Steve Cheramie Risingsun on Celtic and Native spirituality and the traits they share. What are those traits?

As pre-Christian traditions, both Native Americans and Celtic peoples have been described as having "an Old Testament faith." When the Christian faith was proclaimed to them, they quickly made connections with what they already knew about God. Both claimed the Psalms and their vivid experience of God in the created world. Both were drawn to the figure of Jesus—his teaching and healing ministry and his refusal of violence. In both traditions, "little prayers" were important—small pauses at dawn or dusk, in the midst of work or at mealtimes to recognize the Source of Life. Both traditions loved story, art, music and ritual. Both understood the importance of kinship, fidelity to relationships and justice in the community. They shared an understanding and experience of the "communion of saints," the unseen hosts who cheer us on our way to faithfulness and to union with God.

A major difference between the two traditions was that missionaries who came to Celtic lands honored and respected local traditions. Looking for places of connection with the faith that was already practiced, they evangelized through a process of inculturation rather than confrontation. Native Americans experienced a rejection of their spirituality and rituals and suffered enormous losses, even death, at the hands of Christians.

Who have been your primary co-laborers?

I've been blessed with extraordinary co-laborers: pastors, worship leaders, artists, musicians and spiritual directors who stay in close touch, help me interpret the church's needs and give me feedback about what works and what doesn't.

I've often collaborated with Ken Nafziger, a music professor from Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.) with an extraordinary imagination for interpreting music and an amazing gift for calling forth the church's song. We have admired and worked with John Bell of the Iona Community (Scotland) and been influenced by his vibrant, creative, justice-oriented approach to worship and spirituality.

Other musicians—Marilyn Houser Hamm and Randall Spaulding, those who worked on the hymnal supplements, and Stanley, my husband, a congregational song leader all his life—have been significant conversation partners along the way.

Many of my seminary faculty colleagues have influenced my work in the denomination—Mary Oyer, June Alliman Yoder, Rebecca Slough, Daniel Schipani, John Rempel, Alan Kreider and others.

Seminary students from near at home and around the world have also been significant collaborators behind the scenes.

My most important collaborator in spirituality was Marcus Smucker, the first person I worked with. We hammered out a Mennonite theology of spiritual formation that sustained our teaching and training of pastors and spiritual directors.

And I've had good bosses who respected my work, provided good critique and gave me freedom to guide the church. TM

Marlene Kropf at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., in September 2009 at a weekend training event for worship and music leaders.
Photo by Brian Paff

Keeping children safe from abuse and neglect

Children are a delight. They make us smile. They bring new life to us unlike any other source. Children are also a great responsibility. They are unbelievably vulnerable and sometimes lacking in common sense. They need us to protect them and provide their most basic and constant needs for food, shelter, clothing and safety—day in and day out, for many, many years.

Sadly, scores of children are hurt every day by those responsible to care for them. Some children are even killed by the people closest to them. Through abuse and neglect, the light in these children's eyes is fading. They are giving up on the hope that someone will ever love them in a way that doesn't hurt. They need us to protect them, value them and give them life again.

In 2007, nearly 80 percent of perpetrators of abuse were the parents of the victim(s). And of the parental perpetrators, nearly all (88 percent) were the biological parents, and 7 percent were other relatives.

As recorded in Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus commands us to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." He goes on to command us to "love your neighbor as yourself." The children in our families, our churches and the communities where we live and work are our neighbors. We must do all we can to keep children safe and provide them what they need to grow and thrive.

Child abuse: a real problem

Child abuse and neglect is a problem of vast proportions. In the United States in 2007, 3.2 million reports were made to Child Protective Services (CPS), involving 5.8 million children as alleged victims of child abuse and neglect. Nearly two-thirds (59 percent) of these reports were for some type of neglect. The remainder were for physical abuse (11 percent), sexual abuse (8 percent), emotional abuse (4 percent) and other types of abuse or neglect (16 percent). Even more alarming is the large number of children being abused or neglected in which the situation is never reported and safety and help are not provided. These children are out of the reach of protection, and their families are not being given the services they need to provide a safe and healthy environment for these children.

It is important to teach our children about "stranger danger," but it is also important for us to realize that more children are hurt by their caretakers or other people they know and trust. According to CPS records in 2007, nearly 80 percent of perpetrators of abuse were the parents of the victim(s). And of the parental perpetrators, nearly all (88 percent) were the biological parents,

Let the children come

By Jeannette Harder

and 7 percent were other relatives. We must work to make our families a safe place for children.

Child abuse and neglect has dire consequences for the child, family, church and society. The child victim suffers physically, emotionally, behaviorally and spiritually. The family is affected forever. If involved, the church reels from what has happened and must consider its role. And society pays in many ways and through many systems: child welfare, police, legal, health care, mental health.

Here are some of the ways children suffer from abuse and suggestions for how we can respond:

Child neglect

Physical neglect involves the failure of a caretaker to provide necessary food or shelter or appropriate supervision. A neglected child may be chronically hungry, dressed inappropriately and/or often dirty or sick. Neglectful supervision puts many children at risk every day. The law does not stipulate a specific age when a child can be left alone because of many factors: maturity of child, safety of the home and neighborhood, other children in the home.

What can we do? We must work to understand the underlying causes for neglect in a family and be creative, flexible and respectful in our responses to the family. We can fight poverty in big and small ways. We can make donations to food and clothing pantries and day-care programs. We can provide education to parents on literacy, nutrition and child development.

Emotional abuse of children

Emotional abuse scars the hearts and minds of our children in ways not easily healed. Emotional abuse may be comprised of continual scapegoating, rejection or exposure to violence by a child's parent or caretaker. When this is the pattern, a child's ability to form healthy relationships with God, self and others is impaired.

How can we protect children from emotional abuse? Whether we are drinking coffee during fellowship time, disagreeing at a business meeting or shingling a roof, we must choose to use words that are uplifting and pleasing to God. Other people, old and young alike, are listening to us and learning from our behavior.

Physical abuse of children

The minimum standards set by federal legislation for physical abuse are these: "Physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap or other object), burning or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child." Physical abuse may have occurred if a child's injury is unexplained, not consistent with the explanation given or is nonaccidental. Knowing child development is important when considering whether or not a child's injury is accidental.

One type of physical abuse is Shaken Baby Syndrome. When you mix a crying baby with a tired or frustrated parent or an adult who is unfamiliar with the care of the child, the child is at risk for being shaken. Shaken Baby Syndrome occurs when the caretaker picks up and shakes a baby to silence the cries. This is not a light or playful jiggle but a violent thrusting that causes the baby's head to be thrown back and forth. The baby's immature brain sloshes around in the skull and receives serious bruising. The brain swells. The retina of the baby's eye may hemorrhage or become detached. The baby often suffers bruises and skeletal injuries as a result of the harsh handling. Many of these shaken babies die.

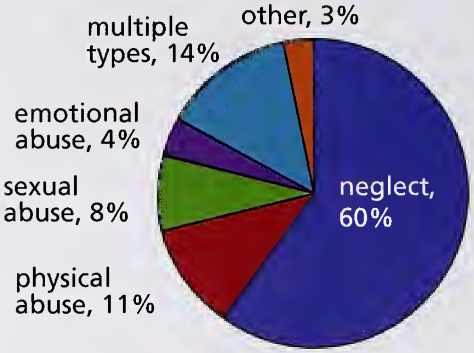
Children need to know that the church in their neighborhood cares about them, that their neighbor wants to play basketball and develop a friendship with them. Parents need to know that the church in their neighborhood is ready and able to ▶

Jeannette Harder's new book is *Let the Children Come: Preparing Our Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect.*

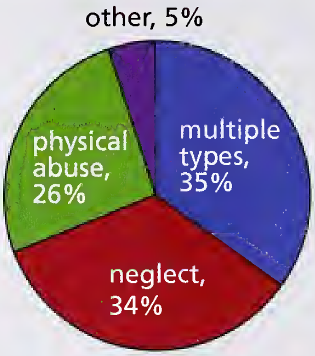
Ten things you can do today to prevent child abuse and neglect

1. Locate and read your church's policy on child safety and protection.
2. Find a curriculum to teach the children in your church about safety. Talk with your director of children's education about what you found.
3. Start a prayer journal for the children and families in your community.
4. Come up with a list of 10 creative ways to discipline a child. Discuss these with a friend.
5. Explore the Child Welfare Information Gateway website: www.childwelfare.gov. Find information (definitions, statistics) specific to your state.
6. Donate food, clothing, books or toys to an organization that serves families.
7. Find or make a poster that helps children identify and express their feelings. Give these posters to families in your church and neighborhood.
8. Call your local CPS office or police unit and invite someone to speak to your church or group about child abuse.
9. Meet or talk with a neighbor.
10. Call a community agency that works with children and families and ask for a list of their volunteer opportunities.—*Jeannette Harder*

Types of child abuse by % of victims



Child fatalities and types of abuse



Source: Child Maltreatment 2007. (2009). Retrieved from www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07

For information on an updated survey from Jeannette Harder, go to www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07

help them. Remember: If you see any mark on a child that is unexplained, report it to CPS or the police as soon as possible.

Sexual abuse of children

Sexual abuse can be defined as "any act occurring between people who are at different developmental stages that is for the sexual gratification of the person at the more advanced developmental stage." Sexual abuse can and is happening in our families and churches. We must stop it. As churches, parents and caretakers, we must be sensitive to what children are trying to tell us and respond with calmness and compassion. A child's outcry will be couched in a child's vocabulary and style, which may mean it is revealed in behavior, a drawing, a letter or in spoken words. Unless we are professionals in child abuse, we should not probe the child for details. Children are easily led by our questions and will react to our emotions. Additionally, when we ask a child to tell his or her story over and over to different people, we are not only contaminating the story but also revictimizing the child.

The church is not equipped to handle the complex nature of sexual abuse but must join in partnership with local professionals who can assist in keeping the child safe, gathering evidence and bringing hope and restoration to the child and nonoffending family members.

The church's role

Child abuse and neglect is such a huge and complex problem that no one entity can be held responsible for ending this tragedy. The government does play an important role in investigating reports of abuse, in providing services, administering out-of-home care for victims and prosecuting offenders. However, the government does not make a good parent and does not have ears and eyes in every home and neighborhood or abundant resources to do all we hope theyll do.

We as Christians and faith communities must acknowledge our vital role in ending the tragedy of child abuse and neglect. When we read the Scriptures through the lens of child abuse and neglect, we can learn many things about God's hopes for us in strengthening families and protecting children from abuse and neglect. We find stories of Jesus blessing and taking time for children. We find parents valuing and protecting their children. We find instructions for healthy family relationships. Overarching all this, we find the importance of family and family relationships.

On one hand, we need to protect the children in our church from someone who may hurt them with their words or actions. On the other hand, and relevant for our churches today, we must protect the children in our church from pain they may experience from our inaction. For whatever reason, many churches are not taking the steps they should to protect the children. Whether this inaction is intentional or not doesn't matter to the child who becomes a victim. We must not hesitate. We must do all we can today to keep the children in our communities safe.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, anyone whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it" (Luke 18:16b-17).

Jeannette Harder is a member of First Mennonite Church in Lincoln, Neb., and an associate professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Social Work. This article is excerpted from her book Let the Children Come: Preparing Our Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect *(Herald Press, 2010, $12.99).*

A true story about the dangers of unsupervised Sunday school teachers of young people.

A cautionary tale

By Anonymous

It all started so innocently. As parents, as a Mennonite faith community, we were so naïve. Now I realize this is what a sexual predator has in his favor.

Our son Brad (real names and some details have been changed), a seventh grader, was eager to participate in activities at our church for many reasons: His friends were there, it was fun and there was a friendly, energetic junior high youth sponsor and teacher who loved spending time with the kids. We parents were grateful for a chance for Brad to connect with this faith community and pleased with the eager leadership of Dan.

This experience has led me to care a great deal about the child-protection policies we can put in place in our congregations.

However, as the months progressed, I noted that I felt uncomfortable with some of the scenarios being played out in the context of junior high ministry. I didn't have a language for what I felt, just a prickly reaction to some things I observed.

The Sunday school class room for the seventh graders was in a loft space, removed from the rest of the classrooms and the flow of traffic and accessible only by foldout stairs. The kids thought it was cool to have their own room, isolated from the rest of the church.

On many Sundays after church, Brad asked us if he could go with Dan to a movie or to the local arcade to play video games. We always said no, as it seemed inappropriate. Other parents said yes.

One Friday night, Dan and his wife scheduled a sleepover at the church. We were given little information as parents, and we questioned Brad about the plans, but since all the other parents had approved, we sent him, too. We found out later that the girls slept in one

▶

room with Dan's wife, and the boys slept in another room with Dan. There were no other adults present, and again I had a prickly feeling.

One Sunday after the adults' Sunday school class ended, several of the parents of seventh graders were waiting around for their kids to be released from the loft. No one was there. A few minutes later, Dan rolled up to the church in his van, and the kids all piled out. They were excited that they had been invited to Dan's house to play video games during the Sunday school hour. As parents, we felt frustrated that we had not been notified that the class was being transported off the church grounds. We were also disappointed that the activities that morning had not been connected to Christian faith formation. But no one said anything to Dan, because he seemed like such a good guy. He played in the worship band; he ran the church sound system and was a ready and willing volunteer with lots of energy and a friendly, can-do disposition. It seemed wrong to question his behavior or doubt his motives. Our trust blinded us.

It was into this climate, this church, this Mennonite community that our son was being groomed for sexual abuse. And although we felt occasional discomfort, we did not know how to put words or actions to our feelings. We did not yet have a language for what we were observing. The church did not have any safeguards in place to protect our son or his peers. In fact, the other parents, lay leaders and the pastor seemed oblivious to the risks of abuse as well. The grooming process (see box on page 22) of a sexual predator was happening right before our eyes, and we did not recognize it as such.

One evening after supper, we dropped off our son at the church to work on a project with Dan to upgrade the church's sound system. It was prearranged that Brad begin learning the ropes of the sound system, and we liked the idea that he would find his own niche in the church. After 30 minutes, Brad called us to say that Dan hadn't shown up. I called his home, and his wife simply said he was not around and would not be able to go to the church that night. We picked Brad up and wondered what had happened.

The next day we found out that the previous night, all things came crashing in around Dan. He had been arrested for sexual abuse of minors and online child pornography. Although Brad had never been abused by Dan, some of his peers had.

Finally, we realized that our discomfort had been justified. We also discovered that Dan had been fired from his three previous jobs, all ones where he had easy access to children and youth: a library, a day-care center and a restaurant.

My view of ministry with children and youth has never been the same. This experience has led me to care a great deal about the child-protection policies we can put in place in our congregations. I have concerns, however, that other parents and church leaders might be as naïve as I once was.

Here are some of my wonderings:

- When I hear a youth worker use inappropriate phrases such as "you little hottie" when talking to a 4-year old, I wonder …
- When I see parents casually let their preschoolers run around the church fellowship hall with only underwear on, I wonder …
- When I notice a 20-year-old man play hide-and-go-seek in the dark halls of a church with 5-year-olds, I wonder …
- When I watch a group of young children playing unsupervised on a church playground that is just blocks away from a busy highway, I wonder …
- When I observe church leaders dragging their feet on placing windows in all classroom doors, I wonder …
- When I know that a church determines it is riskier to ask a long-time teacher to abide by child-protection policies than it is to implement the policies for the sake of the children, I wonder …
- When supervision and accountability take second place to opportunities for isolation and secrecy, I wonder …
- When churches refuse to do background checks because of cost or the nuisance factor, I wonder …

I wonder, are we still enveloped in ignorance? Are children still being put at risk for sexual abuse? Or is the light slowly seeping in? If we don't protect our children, who will?

What is grooming?

Grooming is the process by which a sexual predator gains the trust of someone less powerful through manipulation, gifts, access to technology, money or transportation. Grooming increases the access to a victim, decreases the likelihood of discovery and usually includes grooming the adult community as well.

Many voices, one goal

By Julie Prey Harbaugh

One congregation's journey to becoming a safer place for children

"We needed to tell more stories," reflects pastor Jim Stutzman Amstutz as he thinks back on his church's process of child safety planning. "We found that being able to share our experiences was helpful with our group discernment process." ▶

In the summer of 2007, the leadership of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church decided it was time to draft a new child safety policy. By that October, they were ready to begin the congregational process of putting it into place. Like most churches, they knew that between leadership initiative and congregational implementation lay a path that might present some serious challenges—ones that might eventually keep their child safety plan from being adopted. What if people won't go along with this? the leadership wondered. Will we get enough volunteers for our children's ministries? What about trust?

Akron's leadership eventually decided it was worth the effort to move thoughtfully through this process, bringing a variety of voices into the conversation and listening carefully to members' ideas and concerns. In doing so, they demonstrated three steps essential to successfully creating and implementing a child safety plan in a congregation: raising awareness, making a plan and putting it into practice.

Raising awareness about the prevalence and dynamics of child abuse, as well as what to do about it, helps people in a congregation internalize the reasons for making these changes.

Raising awareness

The first question that needs to be answered for any congregation being asked to implement a child safety policy is, Why? There are many reasons: The insurance company requires it, other congregations or organizations are doing it, the area conference recommends it, even, "It's just the right thing to do." All these may be true—and even compelling or inspirational to some—but in order for a child safety plan to be successful, it needs real buy-in from as much of the congregation as possible. Several of Akron's church leaders had attended trainings offered at Mennonite Central Committee and at the 2007 Mennonite Church USA Convention in San José, Calif., and knew of some stories of abuse in churches. They were convinced that an improved child safety plan was needed in their congregation. Determining how to bring the rest of the congregation on board was the main hurdle they had to overcome.

Akron's leadership realized they needed to raise awareness of the scope of the problem of child abuse and empower members to do something about it. There are many ways to accomplish this goal, but Akron's experience points to something basic about creating safe spaces to discuss difficult topics. "We needed outside voices to raise awareness to a high enough level for us to have a helpful dialogue," says Stutzman Amstutz. "Having experts come share with us was key."

Akron Mennonite used two trainings for raising awareness within their congregation. First the church invited One Childhood Consulting (www.onechildhoodconsulting.com) to present Stewards of Children, a 2.5-hour curriculum that teaches responsible adults to minimize the incidence and impact of child sexual abuse (see www.darknesstolight.org for more information and a listing of facilitators throughout the United States). About 40 people attended the training, which included a DVD presentation, participant workbooks and group discussion, and was offered on two separate occasions. "I liked how personable the presenter was. I felt comfortable to think and respond and process the reality of sexual abuse," an attendee said. "Stewards of Children was helpful to analyze specifics of our own church policy and brainstorm ways to improve."

The second training, on reporting child abuse and neglect to the authorities, was offered in collaboration with Pilgrims Mennonite Church (also located in Akron) and Diamond Street Early Childhood Center (which operates out of the Akron Church building). A staff person from Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (www.pa-fsa.org) taught more than 20 people about Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law, including how to report child abuse, protections for those who report and liability for failing to report. This training added to the congregation's understanding of the systems available to help when child abuse is observed by an adult or disclosed by a victim, and it helped them discuss these issues with confidence.

For most people, making change is hard, even when it is desirable. Organized child safety planning in a congregation asks people to adopt new patterns of behavior in small ways, such as filling out paperwork before volunteering to serve with children, and larger ones, such as taking personal responsibility for reporting child abuse. Taking time to raise awareness about the prevalence and dynamics of child abuse, as well as what to do about it, helps people in a congregation internalize the reasons for making these changes.

Making a plan

At the same time that they were giving the congregation the opportunity to become educated about some of the issues that make a child safety plan necessary in a church, Akron's child safety leadership team was busy at work drafting the actual policy they wanted to put into place. The team included a cross-section of the congregation with a variety of perspectives and skills: parents, a social worker, the Christian education minister, the church administrator and a lawyer were active participants. Drawing from both published materials and plans from neighboring churches, the team debated details and language choices during a series of meetings over several months in order to carefully prepare a plan for presentation to the congregation.

As they moved toward the process of congregational discernment, the team knew there were some aspects of the plan that may be objectionable to some members. They anticipated that requiring background checks might be difficult for some and that requiring two adults in every classroom might be problematic for others. Despite the fact that they might face some pushback, though, Akron's leadership was committed to making sure the congregation's concerns and ideas would be heard, as this was a central part of any significant church decision.

When they came together, however, the congregational meeting took a positive tone, as many people were able to discuss the need for prevention strategies in a helpful way. "The storytelling on the video and the facilitated conversation in the Stewards of Children training was helpful," says Stutzman Amstutz. "It invited people to positive conversation about a difficult topic and opened the way for later conversations during the congregational discernment process. People could point to the experiences of people on the video—or their own experiences—to help us stay focused on why having a child safety plan is important." After some honest conversation that included participants' concerns and hopes for their congregation, the policy was adopted, and the work of putting it into practice could begin.

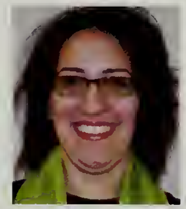
Putting it into practice

It had taken an entire year from the time the leadership first decided to create a child safety plan until it was formally adopted by the congregation. After that, it took several more months before background checks and applications for all volunteers working with children and youth were completed. By the fall of 2009, the policy was fully in place, and now everyone at Akron Mennonite is learning to practice children's and youth ministry from a new perspective, one that has awareness of the ways children can be harmed in our homes and churches and that prioritizes making the congregation as safe as it can be for young people. "Looking back, I'm so thankful we did all the foundational work before implementing the policy," says Stutzman Amstutz. "We collectively keep each other on track with policy guidelines whenever an event surfaces that isn't part of the routine children or youth program. Overall, it's created a positive spirit and ongoing learning environment about safety and prevention."

After some honest conversation that included participants' concerns and hopes for their congregation, the policy was adopted, and the work of putting it into practice could begin.

Hearing the call to action

By beginning with making space to bring challenging stories into the awareness of its people, the leadership of Akron Mennonite was able to guide their congregation through the potentially difficult process of adopting a child safety plan. Stories of child abuse are stories of hurt and pain that are entirely preventable: calls to action that make the case for integrating strategies for prevention and response into the culture of congregations. By paying attention to the importance of these stories in the lives of the people they serve, more and more churches like Akron Mennonite are making the way for their storylines to have a new twist, one in which refuge, healing and hope have a bigger role for young people and the adults they become.



Julie Prey-Harbaugh, director of One Childhood Consulting (www.onechildhoodconsulting.com), is a licensed minister of Franconia Conference, a member of West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship and a chaplain at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

A look at how Mennonite Church USA can live out its commitment to being an antiracist church

Racial healing in

By Glen Alexander Guyton

Antiracism is a priority for Mennonite Church USA. Becoming an antiracist church is a journey and not necessarily a destination. The Continuum on Becoming an Antiracist, Multicultural Institution lists six stages of organizational development in regard to antiracism. These phases range from stage 1: an exclusive, segregated institution, to stage 6: a fully inclusive institution in a transformed society.

At this point, Mennonite Church USA probably falls somewhere in the middle. Moving an institution from symbolic antiracism to meaningful antiracism requires hard work, intentionality and a commitment to change from the dominant culture (Anglo).

In science, the triangle is often used to represent change. The triangle is also symbolic of how the church must work at antiracism. To reach the peak, Anglos and racial/ethnic people must work together. Each group must understand how racism affects them and how they operate within the institution.

Trust is vital in the racial healing process between the Anglos and racial/ethnic groups involved. The dominant culture group has to not only own the process and work at understanding why healing is needed but truly share power with those in the minority culture group. These things are key in moving beyond symbolic change to actually transforming an institution.

It is difficult work to change institutional structures and a culture that maintains white privilege and its power over people of color. Most people are comfortable when things are predictable and familiar. Asking people to change something their ancestors built often causes resentment and misunderstanding. Many of us can identify with the verse from the song "Give Me that Old Time Religion": "It was good for my old father, so it's good enough for me."

At some point we all have to understand that change in itself is not wrong, and making changes does not suggest that all aspects of the heritage and history of any one people group should be cast aside.

But change is necessary to move beyond the status quo. If Mennonite Church USA desires to "honor the dignity and value of all racial/ethnic," as we say, then our systems, power structures and even some of our customs must change as "manifestations of the one new humanity in Christ." The racial healing task group is just the first step in a much longer journey we must make together.

The articles on pages 28-30 present racial healing from an Anglo perspective and from a minority perspective.

Glen Alexander Guyton is associate executive director of constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA.

Continuum on becoming an antiracist, multicultur

EXCLUSIVE

An excluding church: Enforces the racist status quo of dominance and exclusion of African Americans, Arab Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans through its official program, practice, policy, procedures, constituency, structures and mission. Intends to exclude people of color and succeeds in intent. Reflects sinful attitudes and systems of surrounding society. Cannot see the racism iceberg.

PASSIVE

Church of the status quo: Eurocentric in ambience. May say, "We don't have a problem." Tolerant of a limited number of people of color who are "articulate" or "just like us," but the power of white privilege is maintained throughout the institution. Language may include "those people." Racial superiority attitudes remain intact. Intent may have changed, but there is a high level of incongruence between stated intentions and results. May partially acknowledge the racism iceberg but only sees a small part of the tip.

SYMBOLIC CHANGE

An open church: Sees itself as committ
to inclusion of people of color, affirms de
nomination's pronouncements but is oft
unaware of habits of privilege and pater
nalism. Symbolic inclusion; recruits for "someone of color" on committees or staff but not "those who will make waves." No contextual change in culture
policies or decision-making. Characterize
by high attrition rates of people of color.
Some discomfort with incongruence between intentions and results. Antiracist language may be present but not fully owned. Only sees racism iceberg above the water.

Racial and cultural differences seen as defects **Tolerant of racial and cu**

the church

Churchwide racial healing initiative

History

Antiracism work in the Constituency Leaders Council in October 2008 led to a proposal for a churchwide racial healing initiative in Mennonite Church USA. This was blessed by racial/ethnic leaders in March 2009. General affirmation for the proposal by delegates came at the 2009 convention in Columbus, Ohio. They said a process for racial healing through a restorative justice approach could bring wholeness and healing to the church. The CLC and racial/ethnic leaders again affirmed the racial healing process in October 2009 and presented it to the Executive Board for oversight and implementation.

Proposal

To use a restorative justice approach that will include:

- The appointment of a task group from the dominant culture that includes a person knowledgeable in a restorative justice approach to reconciliation.
- The purpose of the task group is to help the dominant culture take ownership and be able to articulate historical and current racism within the church as a beginning step for spiritual transformation.
- The process of the task group will be to hear the stories of racial/ethnic people and congregations who have encountered racism within the church and its conferences and the impact of the harm it caused.
- The accountability of the task group will include ongoing conversation with racial/ethnic leaders in taking steps toward restoring right relationships with racial/ethnic people in the church for the healing of all people.
- A goal of the task group is to help the dominant culture recognize and work on their own spiritual healing.

The dominant culture will take ownership of the process with direct accountability to the Intercultural Relations reference committee. This committee will provide feedback for the racial healing group and process. The Intercultural Committee will have veto power over proposals brought by the Racial Healing Task Group as well as the composition of the Racial Healing Task Group. The Executive Board is ultimately responsible for this process.

Plan

A churchwide task group of six will meet at least twice in 2010 and twice in 2011 (before and after the 2011 convention in Pittsburgh). A progress report will come to delegates at the convention after first being shared with the Executive Board in its April 2011 meeting. The task group first met with racial/ethnic leaders in March.

An approximate budget for the group is $7,500/year for two years. The director of intercultural relations is the staff person for the committee on behalf of the executive director of Mennonite Church USA, and the Executive Board will appoint the initial committee members. Additional recommendations on strategy, staffing and budget will be made after the initial meeting of the Racial Healing Task Group.—*Ron Byler, revised by Glen A. Guyton*

nstitution

IDENTITY CHANGE

An awakening church: Claims an antiracist identity. Desires to eliminate discriminatory practices and inherent advantage. Antiracism training owned and practiced throughout the institution. Expanding view of diversity may include other socially oppressed groups, but decision-makers still conform to norms and practices derived from the dominant group's worldview. Theology claims essential antiracist identity. Teams equipped to dismantle racism. Institutional culture not yet thoroughly representative of cultures of people of color. Working at lowest level of the racism iceberg. Accountability to oppressed community discussed but not yet implemented.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

A redefining church: Not satisfied with just being antiracist, it begins to see the benefits of broader racial and cultural perspective in its ministry and mission. Audits all aspects of church life to represent antiracist commitments. Stated agreement on willingness to struggle; values various conflict styles. New policies and models for inclusive decision-making, mission and ministry. Redefining constituency and structure so they are no longer based on White Power. Antiracism training owned by the institution. Accountability to oppressed community now structured with identifiable veto power. Working at the core of the racism iceberg.

INCLUSIVE

A transformed church: Diversity is seen as an asset. Church reflects contributions and interests of diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, ministry, policies and practices; full participation in decisions that shape the church. A sense of community and mutual caring that is seen and felt. Commitment to confront and dismantle racism within the church and the broader community. Allies with others in battling social oppression. Able to develop antiracist programs. Antiracist identity understood and accepted as normal by the institution and constituency. Institution equipped to melt new forms of the racism iceberg.

differences **Racial and cultural differences seen as assets**

© Damascus Road. Adapted from original chart by Ronice Branding, developed from concepts in multicultural organization by Baily Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian.

Giving up veto power

Racial healing from a dominant culture perspective

By Joanna Shenk

This is uncomfortable. How do I as a person of the dominant, white culture seek racial healing? What does it mean to acknowledge and lament the injustices of the past and wrestle with the reality of continued racism?

It's hard sometimes for me to see the ways I perpetuate racism. It's not my intention.

As we on the Racial Healing Task Group shared meals and stories with members of the Intercultural Relations Reference Council (IRRC), we heard difficult things. We listened as our sisters and brothers told of their regular experiences of racism.

This is not about being right. It's about learning to see in a new way.

It was heavy to encounter skepticism about our work of racial healing. Upon further reflection, though, I realized the track record of the dominant culture has not been great when it comes to solidarity with our racial/ethnic sisters and brothers.

When our task group met together and discussed the input from the IRRC, we all felt overwhelmed. We felt inadequate for the task, though each of us also was committed to it. As we processed our thoughts and feelings we were reminded of the presence of God with us. Although this did not change the complexity and difficultly of working toward racial healing, it did assure us that God is not overwhelmed by what lies ahead.

We decided to focus our work on the passage from 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, which will be our Convention 2011 theme. Indeed, we can be reconciled to each other as we are made into a new creation. At the same time we also acknowledged that we aren't always vessels through which God can make an appeal. Therefore we affirmed a confessional approach to our work. Before God can make an appeal through us we must be aware of our complicity with oppression and be reconciled.

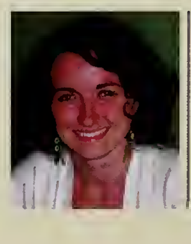
And what of this phrase "dominant culture"? Does it aid us in our work of reconciliation or does it create further divisions? After conversation around the table, we decided it names reality and therefore is an important term to use. At the same time it is uncomfortable to acknowledge that we are a part of it.

We are nice Mennonites, right? It's not our intention to hurt anyone, especially when we think of our history and the ways Anabaptist-Mennonites were persecuted. At the same time, racism is not just about personal relationships or being nice. It's about living within a system set up to benefit some and devalue others.

We thought, We're really influenced by this system in ways we're not aware most of the time. In order to take a step outside of that, we asked the IRRC to hold us accountable. In our work we have given them veto power so that they ultimately decide the healthiest direction for racial healing.

We in the dominant culture are good at coming up with plans and agenda and goals and at times lose sight of the importance of the process. The learning happens in the process, not at the end, the IRRC reminded us again and again. When we said, "We don't want to make a mistake," the response was, "You will, but don't let it stop you."

Aha, we thought. This is different. This is uncomfortable. And this is not about being right. It's about learning to see in a new way. It's about learning to listen. It's about moving slowly and acknowledging our repeated failures. Reconciliation is a long road, a lifelong road and a road filled with the deepest kind of joy as we become a new creation in Christ.



Joanna Shenk is associate director of interchurch relations for Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA.

Racial healing from a minority perspective

The aha moment

By Glen Alexander Guyton

When the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) first recommended that we undertake a racial healing process, I thought, Here we go again. The dominant culture ("white folks") is dreaming up some big plan just to make themselves feel good. There is going to be a bunch of processing, some hymn singing, a couple of meetings, then someone from the dominant culture is going to stand on stage and say, "I'm sorry, black people. I'm sorry, Native people. I'm sorry, Hispanic people." And what will we, the people of color, be doing? Standing there with big ole' Amos 'n Andy grins on our faces trying to look appreciative? Been there and done that many times in Mennonite Church USA.

We do not want a repeat of what happened in San José. This time we want something more. You (person of the dominant culture) need to understand the challenges we have faced as a racial minority and the challenges we continue to face in society and in our chosen church. You have to be able to hear and understand our stories. Then you, as part of the dominant racial group, have to own and understand your white privilege before you can truly apologize for the systematic racism that causes those in the minority pain and divides the body of Christ. When that aha! moment hits you, and you understand that racism is a system that benefits the dominant culture overtly and covertly, then we can talk about racial healing.

I hate to say this, but it is the truth. There is a race problem in the United States of America, and it does not end at the doorsteps of Mennonite Church USA. When I speak of racism in the church, it does not mean that those in the church are not Christian or do not like or even love people of color. When the Intercultural Relations Reference Committee (IRRC) met with the newly formed Racial Healing Task Group (RHTG), personal friendships were not the issues. Many of those on the RHTG (all-white) were friends and acquaintances with those on the IRRC*. The issue is a system that does not fully recognize or utilize the gifts and talents of people of color. The issue is a group whose leadership structure may be out of tune with a portion of its constituency. The issue is a church whose styles and procedures do not always motivate and inspire a constituency desperately looking for ways to belong.

> Many in the dominant culture are ignorant of what it take to survive in my world, the world of a racial minority, while I have had to become an expert of the denominant culture just to get to average.

Racial healing cannot begin until those in the dominant culture have that aha! moment. Honestly, many in the dominant culture are ignorant of what it takes to survive in my world, the world of a racial minority, while I have had to become an expert of the dominant culture just to get to average. The RHTG is beginning to get to that aha! moment. It began with stories, stories of how some of us as the racial minority have had to hide our color in order to earn a living for our families. The groups heard stories of how white people have had to vouch for us in order for us to obtain loans—loans we were more financially qualified to obtain than the whites who vouched for us. There were stories of how some Latinos are not able to travel and how language-specific resources are difficult to come by. Some even told stories of genocide in their home countries and how white missionaries urged them not to fight while their brothers and sisters are being murdered. You could say that is the ultimate in white privilege, telling the person of color how to live out their faith when your family is safe and secure from war. Hearing stories is an important step.

> White privilege does not make you evil or mean that you will be the next David Duke. It just means that as a white person in America you get the benefit of the doubt, and we as people of color get the doubt and have to work for the benefit.

Ownership was the next movement toward the aha! moment. Though the initial racial healing process proposal from CLC was flawed in that it placed a heavy burden on the people of color to fix an issue and system in which they are an oppressed victim, the revised proposal did a much better job of giving the burden back to the dominant culture, those that benefit from systematic racist oppression. Whites have to own the process and own their white privilege, whether they want to or not. Many from the dominant culture get disheartened when they hear they benefit from a racist system. White privilege does not make you evil or mean that you will be the next David Duke. It just means that as a white person in America you get the benefit of the doubt, and we as people of color get the doubt and have to work for the benefit. Understanding this helps you realize the flaws inherent in our society and in our church and hopefully will motivate you as a member of the dominant culture to work at dismantling the system.

The sharing of power is another crucial component to the "aha! I get it" moment. Power can be a dirty word in the church. We form committees and processes that are supposed to help diffuse the power in the church and spread it among many people. The truth is that the church does have positions and people of power. A lot of this power resides in the hands of Anglo males. Our system is set up and designed for the efficacy of Anglo males. Everyone else is trying to fit in. The RHTG did a wonderful thing. They gave the IRRC veto power over all decisions and recommendations coming from the group. That is truly a sharing of power and a sharing that allows healing. It is a simple but powerful step that is analogous to a mother telling one sibling, "One cuts, the other gets to choose." When the one managing the resource realizes that another one gets to distribute the resource, more consideration and a greater sense of fairness goes into the decision-making process.

There is much work yet to be done in regard to racial healing in Mennonite Church USA. This work will take time and will make many people uncomfortable. According to Curtis DeYoung, "Systems of injustice in society and in the church exact a heavy cost on those outside the centers of power and effectively block reconciliation," and "declaring that we are equal without repairing the wrongs of the past is cheap reconciliation." We must avoid cheap reconciliation. We must work toward real healing. In the end, true racial healing will change the status quo. It will affect how we do business and how we worship with one another.

Glen Alexander Guyton is associate executive director of constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA.

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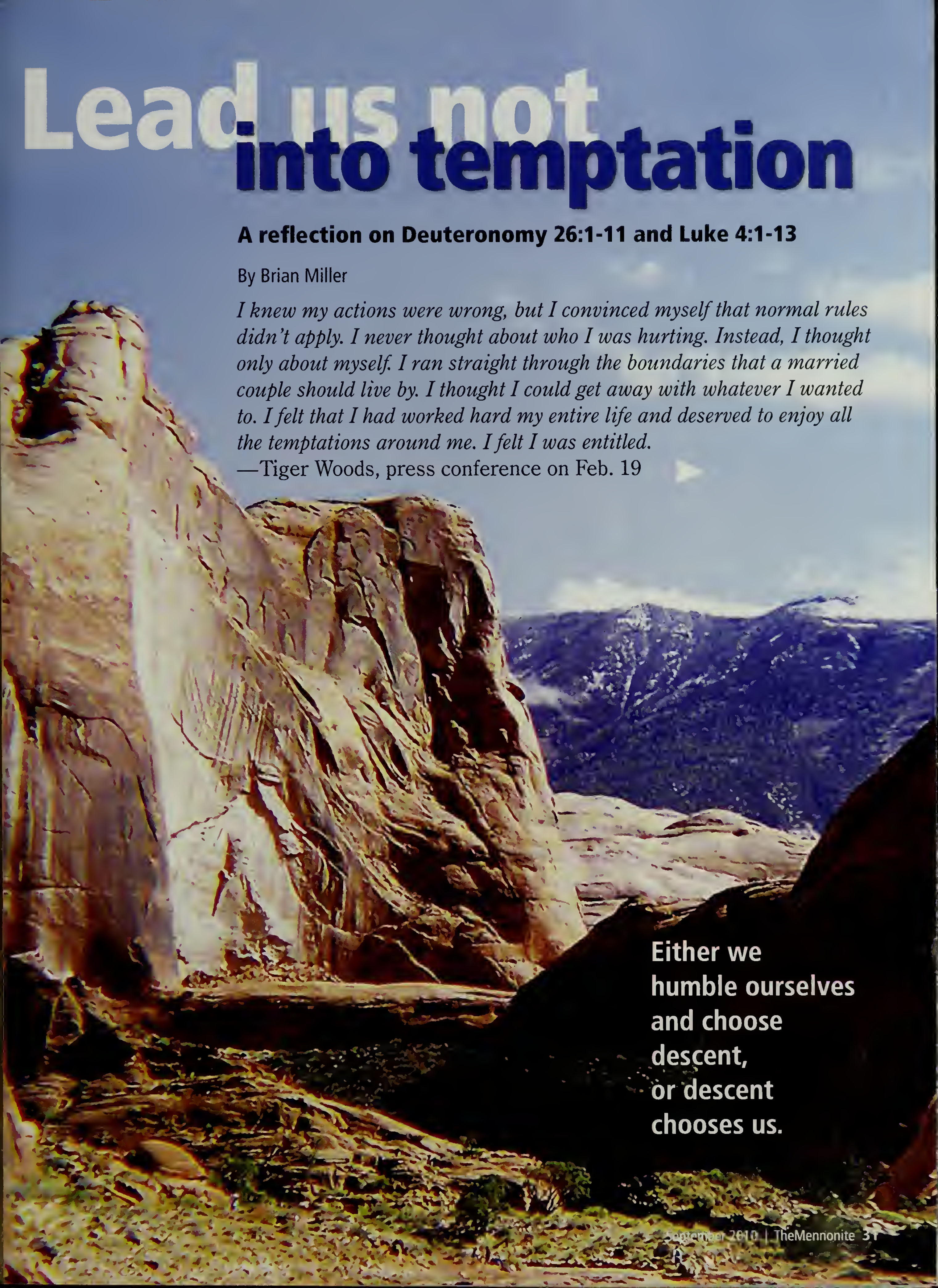
* The IRRC is composed of two Africans, two Latinos, two Native Americans, three African-Americans (including the denominational minister for Intercultural Relations), two Asians and one Anglo.

Lead us not into temptation

A reflection on Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

By Brian Miller

I knew my actions were wrong, but I convinced myself that normal rules didn't apply. I never thought about who I was hurting. Instead, I thought only about myself. I ran straight through the boundaries that a married couple should live by. I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted to. I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me. I felt I was entitled.
—Tiger Woods, press conference on Feb. 19



Either we humble ourselves and choose descent, or descent chooses us.

These are the words of a man on a journey of descent. It is not for us to judge whether these words are true or not—or where this descent will lead. The life of Tiger Woods over many months illustrates the universal principle for the human situation, that if we want to experience healing and hope, our journey requires descent. Either we humble ourselves and choose descent, or descent chooses us.

Our Gospel lesson calls us again to embrace descent. Luke's Gospel situates the narrative of the temptation of Jesus directly after the "mountaintop" experience of his baptism. Now, full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is led into the wilderness. Somewhere in the course of a 40-day fast, Jesus becomes famished. Jesus is utterly human. He is weak. He is vulnerable. He is dependent on the Holy Spirit. The devil comes to him.

Through our baptism, we are made citizens in the kingdom of Jesus, which is a revolution of cross-bearing love.

First temptation: stones to bread

Jesus, turn this stone into bread. … Jesus, turn this tax return into the good life. … Jesus, bless me and expand my territory, my right to buy and use my way to happiness. And while you're at it, Jesus, why don't you take care of the bread problem. You could have such an effective ministry as the Son of God if you would just solve the bread problem in the world. And besides, you look a bit hungry yourself.

The first temptation is framed around the most basic issue of human life—bread. This first temptation (and the other two) are based on a false premise—that Jesus needs to prove he is the Son of God. Jesus is concerned about the bread problem in the world, but this is not the way it will be solved in his kingdom—by miraculous acts of stone into bread. His kingdom is about bread—both physical and spiritual, but it will require an alternative way of thinking about bread.

Bread is the source of life. Every culture, every system, every ideology tells some story about bread and our relationship to it. Capitalism teaches us how to make bread and sell it for a profit in the market. Socialism attempts to control the bread market so that all will have an equal amount. On the streets, you do whatever it takes to turn stone into bread. Each of these systems provides a different way of thinking about our relationship with bread.

What does Jesus say about bread? Jesus says one does not live by bread alone. Jesus says it is not so much about the bread but about the word of God—the framing story through which we make sense of our lives and the world. The gospel of the kingdom is about a different way of being in relationship with bread.

So much violence in our world and within ourselves has to do with living in framing stories that establish a wrong relationship with bread. A wrong relationship with Jesus–the bread of life. A wrong relationship with the physical things that are a part of human life.

Questions:

1. What is our relationship with Jesus—the Bread of Life?

2. Where is our relationship with physical bread out of whack (in a way that contributes to the violence of our world)?

The issue is never about whether there is enough bread but whether we are willing to trust Jesus for bread. And then, are we willing to be the hands and feet of Jesus—sharing until all are fed? A right relationship with bread is connected with our common worship as a community of faith—where we recognize the true source of Bread. We see this in the Old Testament reading. In the common worship of the covenant community, the first fruits of life's work are brought to God (along with songs and prostrations). God is the source of this "bread," and it is offered back to God as an act of worship. The bounty is shared with the "aliens" who live among the covenant community.

So we don't depend on Jesus to turn stones into bread to solve the bread problem of our world. Jesus, in his kingdom, calls us to share our loaves and fishes—or pennies.

Second temptation: glory and authority in exchange for power

Jesus, here are all the kingdoms of the world. I will give their glory and all this authority to you. … Jesus, here is a list of candidates we need to get elected so your kingdom can come. … We have the right candidates in place, the media outlets, the organization to go all the way this time. We have included all the Christian churches in the communication blitz. It's all set up for your kingdom to come this election … if you just worship me.

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the

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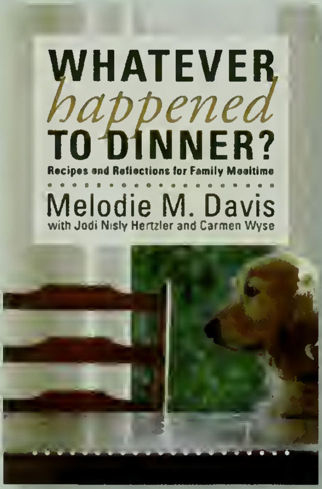
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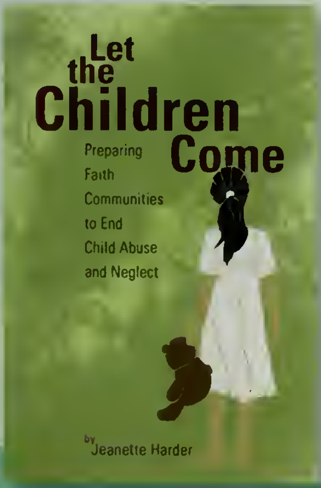

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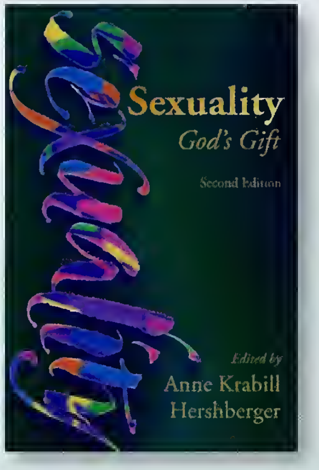

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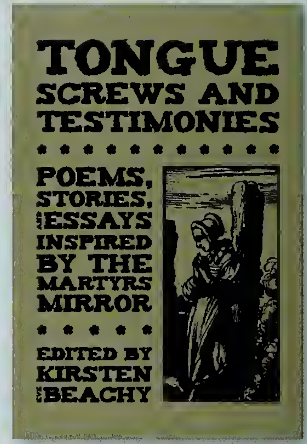

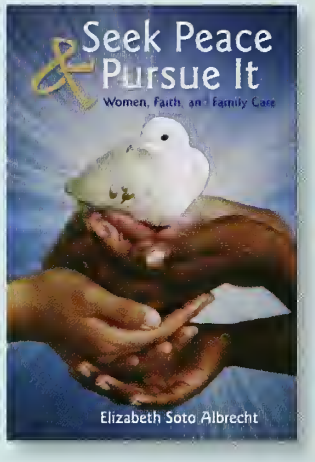

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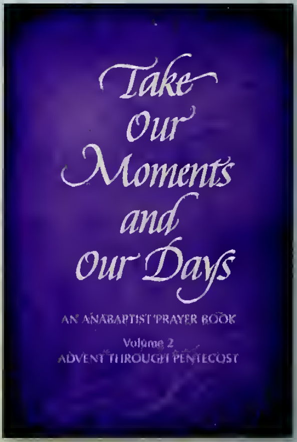

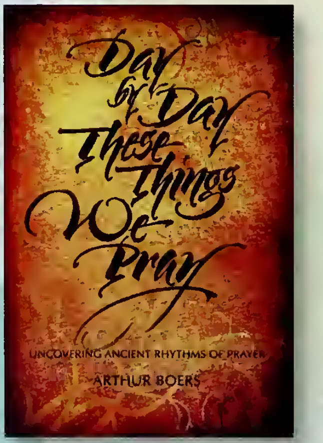

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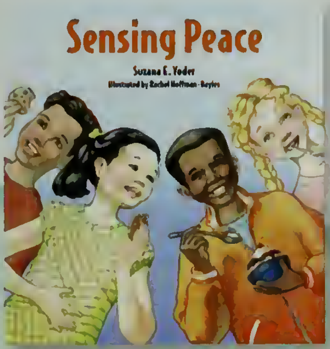

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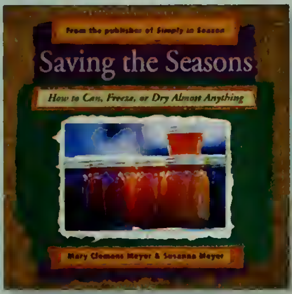
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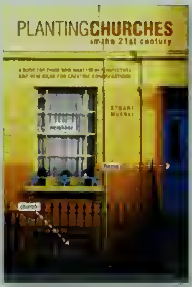

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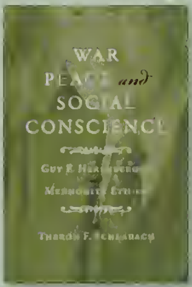

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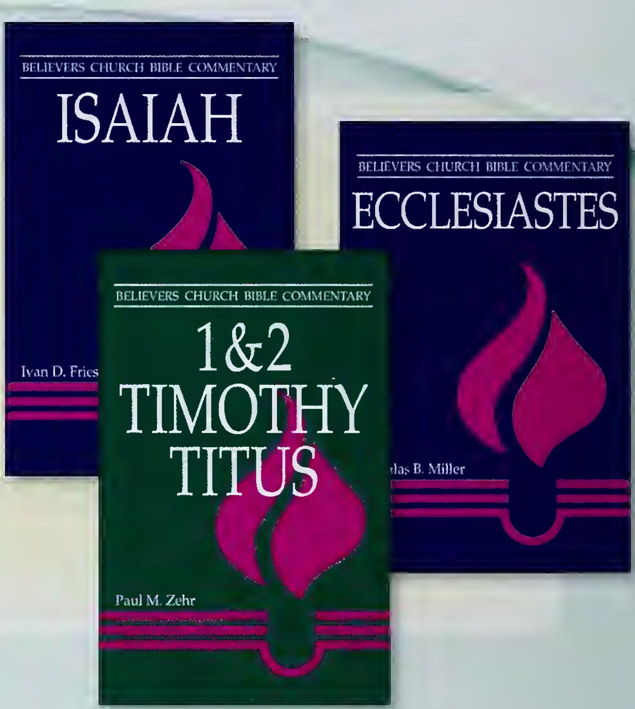
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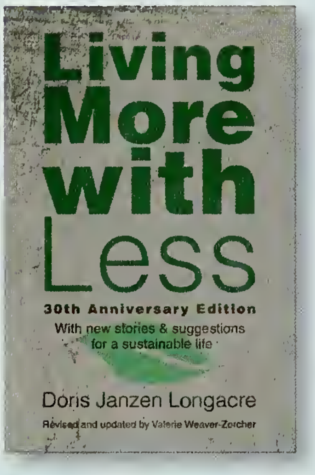
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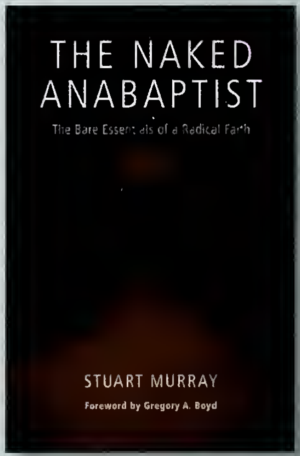
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Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

The devil shows Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world." I'm pretty sure this included the United States of America. Jesus rejects the temptation of bringing his reign in the clothes of the emperor.

For much of church history, those who claimed the name Christian have acted as if Jesus got this one wrong. Christendom tried to baptize the state and the way of the sword. We have rejected the way of the cross. We have even thought we can put Scripture on our weapons. This is not new. This is all from the same playbook. I'm just not sure it's the playbook of Jesus.

The second temptation is about worship. It is a question of whether we will worship the way of empire—which is always power over. Or will we worship Jesus, who embraces the way of the cross as the way to bring the kingdom? Do we recognize the political implications of our worship? Our worship is not an escape from the real world. Quite the opposite, it is a way of coming to grips with an invasion of another life from another world into the present age.

Walter Brueggemann says it so well: "The lectionary is unrelenting in its narrative about another life in another world, the one that God wills and gives. Readers are endlessly in the process of deciding, always yet again, for the alternative, refusing the seductions of the 'belly'-propelled regime" (*Sojourners*, February).

So this place we are meeting is an embassy of the kingdom of Jesus. Through our baptism, we are made citizens in the kingdom of Jesus, which is a revolution of cross-bearing love. We are given credentials and invited to live as ambassadors of reconciliation. This is our baptismal identity as disciples. This is what it means to be a part of covenant community. This is why it is so important to gather together for common worship—so that we actually are discipled—formed—into this alternative life.

Question: How is our common worship equipping us to "always yet again" decide for the alternative narrative that rejects the temptation of glory and authority in exchange for power in the current age as a way of bringing the kingdom of Jesus?

Third Temptation: market-driven Christianity

Jesus, why don't you go up to the temple and throw yourself off. God will protect you. That's what the Bible says. ... Jesus, you need to make a name for yourself. How do you expect to have a successful ministry, if you don't do something spectacular ... something to draw a crowd ... a following. Jesus, this is just the kind of thing people are looking for. We could really market this. Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

Jesus does not opt for the gimmick—jumping off the Temple. Jesus is not driven by ego or the need to make his ministry appealing to the masses. He is not about putting on a good show.

Jesus calls us to descend with him from our illusions of invincibility and entitlement to the earthy, ordinary way of crosses, suffering-love, humility and repentance.

Jesus rejects the temptation to extract the Good News of the kingdom from ordinary life to the artificial medium of religious antics. His kingdom represents a descent from market-driven Christianity into the messiness of crowds, where there are unclean spirits. He calls us to descend with him from our illusions of invincibility and entitlement to the earthy, ordinary way of crosses, suffering-love, humility and repentance.

It is appropriate that our Gospel reading on this first Sunday of Lent centers on Jesus fasting. If you had to go a week without technology, what would you miss the most and why? Giving up something can be a way of entering into solidarity with Jesus and the church on the journey of descent toward the cross.

Hear this invitation from The Book of Common Prayer: "I invite you in the name of the Church (Jesus), to self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word."

Like Jesus, may the fullness of the Spirit sustain us as we are led into the wilderness—in our lives and in the world. This too is part of the journey of healing and hope.

Brian Miller is pastor of Sunnyside Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

A word from Mennonite Church USA leaders

Does church publishing matter?

Ron Rempel is executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network.

This is a question I was asked in an interview for a Mennonite Church Canada radio program called Church Matters—available as a podcast at www.mennonitechurch.ca. Here are excerpts from the interview.

Q: These days parents and the church educators use a lot of resources that do not necessarily come from their denominational publisher. Does having a church publisher really matter anymore?

A: A Mennonite pastor stated bluntly, "If we quit producing our own materials, we will quit being the Mennonite church." I agree with the underlying assumption that a body of published material—whether in print or some other form—is crucial in grounding the identity and mission of a denomination. This begs the question whether it's important to continue having a denomination called Mennonite. I would say yes, as long as we don't think we can be the church of Christ all on our own and as long as we see this identity as a gift to be shared and not as a fence to close ourselves off from everyone else.

Increasingly, we can't assume that just because people are part of a church they will use material from their publisher.

Q: It's been said that you can't compete with all the free material in the digital marketplace. We live in a multimedia age, where production values sometimes sell a product better than the content. Is success in the publishing ministry as simple as making your product so much better or so different that people will want to pay for it?

A: Frankly, it's hard to compete, especially when resources are limited. I believe the way to be successful is to create something of value that people and churches want and need so they can be true to their identity as the people of God. Will people automatically want to pay for this? Not necessarily and not at any cost. Obviously we have to make things as affordable as possible. But if we keep connecting with people around the core value proposition, then we at least have a chance.

Q: What does that value proposition look like to an Anabaptist publisher?

A: A Christ-centered and community-based faith that expresses itself in a practical lifestyle of discipleship, service, peacemaking.

Q: Does it also need to be packaged as flashy and glitzy?

A: Increasingly, we can't assume that just because people are part of a church they will use material from their publisher. We are having to put more energy and money into marketing and making our case. This is a task that belongs not only to the church publisher but to all parts of the church.

Q: So loyalty is on the decline. There's tons of free online material. What is the biggest opportunity you see as a denominational publisher?

A: We're dealing with churches and their members with whom we have a historic and ongoing relationship. Many appreciate the foundational resources that have been provided over the years—hymn books, Sunday school material, devotional material, recordings of memorable songs, books on living the faith in practical ways. This ongoing relationship and conversation give us the cues we need on what to publish and in what forms to deliver this content—whether in print or in the many new digital media. One of the exciting features of the emerging social media is their relational character and the opportunity for two-way conversation about things that really matter.

Q: What would congregational life look like if there were not a denominational publisher to provide churches with hymn books, devotional resources or Sunday school curriculum?

A: Our congregations and families are resourceful. If there were no denominational publisher they would establish one to help them do what they do every day. On the one hand, they're trying to read the culture and figure out what is life-giving and what is life-threatening. On the other hand, they are reading the Bible and listening for God's word for our time. They are creating places for people to study and talk and rituals that will help people align with God's purposes. Some of the larger churches could continue doing this on their own for a long time. But most of the churches would eventually say, Why can't we do this collectively so that we can each benefit from what others are doing? TM

What is this place?

We've recently moved to a new house and neighborhood. On our first Sunday, the church we visited hosted a reception for a member who was turning 99. We learned that this remarkable woman was still living in the same house where she had grown up as an only child and where she and her husband had raised nine of their own children. Several people, one after the other, told us this astonishing news, to which I could only stammer in wide-eyed disbelief, You can't be serious.

My imagination doesn't serve me well when trying to fathom what it would be like to live one's entire life in the same house, on the same block, in the same town, for 99 years. My best calculation is that I've lived in at least 23 houses over my five-plus decades, and that doesn't include many dorm rooms from first grade through college and short-term living arrangements during transitional times. Five of those were childhood homes in Ethiopia, and several more included homes on furlough visits to America.

My mother used to say, "It takes a heap o' livin' to make a house a home." Gladness glows from fingertips to toes as I remember the many houses that became vessels for heaps of good livin'.

Here's a sample: The home of my birth was a rough brick factory-worker duplex on a cotton-mill compound turned missionary hospital in Nazareth, Ethiopia. The cinder block house a few years later was on the Bible Academy compound along the gravel road leading toward the cane fields and sugar factories of Wonji and Shoa. From my bedroom window, I could see a cluster of thatched huts just across the fence and the sacred grove where sacrifices were made. We used army cots for couches, a wringer washer would flatten little hands along with the wet clothes if you weren't careful, and we used wood-heated water for bathing once a week.

In one furlough, we lived in a Pennsylvania farmhouse with hay mow tunnels in the pungent tobacco barn, an apple cellar, a parlor with plush furniture and a warm kitchen where I told my family while staring at a bowl of golden home-canned peaches that I had decided to follow Jesus.

A squat bungalow housed up to 10 of us at one time and many more when the family flocked home on holidays. My husband and I were married under the spreading elm tree there within sight of a vineyard, fruit trees and garden that Dad still cultivates at 92.

A "bachelor's" apartment in California with a bed that folded out of the wall was our first home as a married couple. Later we moved to a rent-free apartment at Stump Mortuary, where as seminary students we earned a little by assisting with viewings and funerals. Ten of us lived in intentional community for a year in a large house a few blocks from Sirhan Sirhan's former residence.

In our sublet first apartment in the former Yugoslavia, Gerald and I shared a single bed—for six months. Next we moved to an apartment in Zagreb's "little red square," where my night nursings of our firstborn included putting wood on the fire in the ceramic stove. When we invited a Hungarian student to share our space, we divided the living room with large wardrobes so half of it could be her bedroom. Our landlady yelled at us: "What will the neighbors think?" but reluctantly came around.

Later, with our year-old son in tow, we lived in a Muslim neighborhood of Sarajevo, Bosnia. Each evening we loved to go upstairs to share Turkish coffee and TV news with our landlord's family. Again we invited a young student at the university who had nowhere to live into our little apartment. She slept on the couch bed in the kitchen and helped out with child care.

Our next basement apartment was dark and laced with mildew. I nearly despaired when we arrived back in Zagreb from the United States with our 3-week-old second son to find the landlord excavating the bathroom. But it was here that I first truly owned my vocation as a mother, and my first book was born.

There was the student apartment a block from Lake Michigan during graduate study and the shared life of Reba Place Church. When we returned to Zagreb, we shared a household with Serbian friends. This is where we first brought our 3-week-old daughter home. In recent years, we've enjoyed owning our own homes in Virginia, one on a hill where my dad used to chase rabbits as a boy. And now we have a home filled with light on the Elkhart River.

What is this place? Whether one house or many, small or spacious, dark or filled with light—"One thing I ask of the Lord … that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." TM

Sara Wenger Shenk is president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

My mother used to say, 'It takes a heap o' livin' to make a house a home.'

Holy or unholy land?

Myron Schrag is a retired pastor in Goshen, Ind.

One can travel to Israel/Palestine and view the holy sites where biblical events took place. We saw many of these holy sites on a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Learning Tour. The "holiness" of these sites is negated by hordes of tourists jostling to get the best camera angle and less-than-reverent behavior. Then there are the ubiquitous gift shops at nearly every site selling T-shirts, postcards and trinkets of all kinds. Viewing such sites certainly gives one some background as you read the Bible, but the sites alone do not give one a picture of what is really going on in the so-called "Holy Land."

Here in the United States the media are biased in reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinian side is rarely reported. Most people agree that Israel has a right to exist. However, Israel does not have the right to oppress the Palestinian people, many of whom are Christian but most of whom are Muslim. Very few are terrorists. The formerly oppressed do not have the right to oppress others. The treatment of the Palestinians by the Israelis is anything but holy. It is nothing less than apartheid.

There is nothing holy about a wall that separates Israeli from Palestinian. The wall is an ugly monstrosity that snakes through the rocky, hilly landscape, keeping Palestinians from their families and their land as well as access to hospitals. In order to build the wall, land was confiscated from the Palestinians without compensation. The wall is less for security than as a land-grab by Israelis to wrest ever more land that Palestinians have lived on for generations. The wall effectively imprisons thousands of innocent Palestinians.

There is nothing holy about illegal Jewish settlements being built on land confiscated from Palestinians.

There is nothing holy about Palestinian homes being demolished by Israeli authorities under the pretext that the builders of the homes had no permits to build when permits are rarely given. Not only are the homes demolished but the families must pay for the expenses of the demolishment. There is nothing holy about Israeli soldiers in watchtowers on the wall shooting at children playing in a refugee camp. There is nothing holy about numerous checkpoints making Palestinians wait in line for long periods, severely limiting travel. There is nothing holy about illegal Jewish settlements being built on land confiscated from Palestinians.

There is nothing holy about Palestinians in refugee camps having access to water two hours per week while the Jewish settlement on the other side of the wall has water 24-7 and even has swimming pools. There is nothing holy about West Jerusalem having nice, broad, clean streets while East Jerusalem, the Palestinian area, has potholed streets and uncollected garbage. When one learns that 80 percent of tax revenues go to West Jerusalem while only 20 percent goes to East Jerusalem, this is understandable.

There is nothing holy about a land where Palestinian Christians are leaving due to the harsh policies of Israeli authorities. There is nothing holy when Palestinian Christians say they feel abandoned by U.S. Christians, who seem unaware or uncaring about their plight. It is unholy to hear them say that the greatest threat to peace are the Christian Zionists.

There is nothing holy about Israelis not being allowed to visit Bethlehem because the Israeli government says it cannot guarantee their safety. There is nothing holy about a system of roads on which only Israelis are allowed to travel. There is nothing holy about a land where the Israeli government carries out such injustices against Palestinian Christians and Muslims with the support of the U.S. government.

Jesus must be weeping over the land where he was born. Yet we witnessed holy things as well. It is holy when Jewish and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones in the conflict share their mutual grief and vow to work together for peace. It is holy when some Jewish young people refuse to join the Israeli military, even if it means a jail term, rather than take part in the oppression of Palestinians. It is holy when a Jewish organization works to stop home demolitions. It is holy when the Palestinian people react nonviolently to the oppression inflicted upon them. It is holy when Palestinians say they don't hate the Jewish people but hate the occupation.

It is holy when MCC, World Vision and other organizations work to improve life for Palestinian villagers by installing water-purification systems and making funds available for farmers to purchase sheep, goats or bees.

There is the holy amid the unholy. Jesus came into an unholy world. Through his faithful people he is present today in our still unholy world. He is present when Jewish and Palestinian people work together for peace and justice. When there is justice in the Holy Land there will be peace. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Delegation of 21 goes to Arizona to 'listen'

Focus shifts from new Arizona law to solidarity and unity within MC USA.

Twenty-one members of a Mennonite Church USA delegation met with municipal leaders and church members in Phoenix, Aug. 12-13 as well as with BorderLinks, an organization working to build bridges of solidarity across North and Latin American borders.

The purpose of the delegation's visit was not to make a decision about the Mennonite Church USA 2013 convention but to listen. While the delegation initially planned to focus on the Arizona law (SB1070) and its effects, members found the focus shift to the issue of being one church and to the question, "How do we as one church walk together in solidarity and unity?"

At the upcoming Sept. 23-24 Leaders Forum in Pittsburgh, participants will have the opportunity to assist in the discernment process regarding the 2013 convention location. The final decision will be made by the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA. This Leaders Forum will include the Constituency Leaders Council—of which Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH) is a part—as well as boards of churchwide agencies and constituency groups and college presidents.

Yvonne Diaz, executive director of IMH, said the important question is, "Will we be able to show each other as brothers and sisters that we are all the church, that every person is important to the body of Christ?"

Saulo Padilla, director of the Immigration Education Office at Mennonite Central Committee U.S., said the delegation came to realize that "issues of injustice, such as immigration or the Arizona SB1070 law, are not isolated Hispanic or ethnic issues but issues that affect the body of Christ as a whole."

Phoenix city government leaders, who have expressed their opposition to the new legislation, extended the invitation to the delegation to come, and the Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau covered expenses for the trip. Phoenix leaders made their case for Mennonite Church USA to keep to its earlier decision to hold its 2013 convention in Phoenix.

In a meeting on Aug. 12, Vice Mayor Michael Nowakowski pointed out to the delegation that 25 percent of businesses in the convention center are Hispanic-owned and operated and are suffering from boycotts of events due to the new law and that Hispanics make up 40 percent of Phoenix's population.

On Aug. 13, the delegation met with police chief Jack Harris, assistant chief Jim Piña, Mayor Phil Gordon and assistant city manager Ed Zuercher, who is a member of Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix. Harris and Piña assured the delegation that they believe the city is safe for convention-goers. Zuercher, on Aug. 16, said the conversation with the delegation was "healthy and productive."

Photo provided

The 21 members of the Aug. 12-13 delegation to Phoenix

"We need the help of churches like Mennonite Church USA to come here and witness to justice, to learn about what's happening here," he said.

Later on Aug. 13, the delegation met at Trinity Mennonite with Margi Ault-Duell of BorderLinks. She spoke to the group about "messages" that people may believe about immigrants, contrasted with the values of a faith tradition that involve welcoming and caring for the stranger. About 100 people gathered there from local Mennonite churches and a non-Mennonite Hispanic church that meets at Trinity.

For Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA, "the main issue is whether we are a church that argues over points of view or a church that attempts to discern together the leading of the Holy Spirit."

Kuaying Teng, minister of Asian Ministries for Mennonite Mission Network, agreed that we are to be "inclusive of all people involved in the process as a church."

Padilla said, "During casual conversations, some Hispanic leaders who have been part of Mennonite Church USA for the last few decades commented that five decades ago, this kind of conversation would not have been possible, nor the kind of representation of [underrepresented racial/ethnic people] in such a meeting."

The fact that the delegation was a diverse group was also important to Glen Guyton, associate executive director of constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA.

"This was not an Anglo-led process or a Hispanic-led process but a Mennonite Church USA process in which many voices were genuinely heard," he said.

A statement from the delegation can be found online at http://www.mennoniteusa.org/Home/News/tabid/65/EntryID/396/Default.asp—*Mennonite Church USA*

MCC worker killed in Afghanistan

MCC partner rejects claims that staff killed were trying to convert Muslims.

Tom Wenger

Glen Lapp, left, and John Williamson, MCC Nepal, India, Afghanistan representative, in July 2010

A Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker in Afghanistan, Glen D. Lapp of Lancaster, Pa., was killed last month in a shooting incident in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province.

Since MCC does not have a program in Afghanistan, Lapp, a nurse, worked with an MCC partner, International Assistance Mission. IAM provides eye care and medical help in Afghanistan. Lapp organized mobile eye camps in the remote areas of Afghanistan. He was 40 years old at the time of his death.

Lapp was traveling home with an IAM medical team of four Afghans, six Americans, one Briton and one German after a two-week "eye camp" trip. Local police found 10 bodies on Aug. 6 next to abandoned vehicles. One Afghan team member traveled home via another route and was safe. Another Afghan survived the attack and was being questioned by the police.

On Aug. 8, Lapp's family (parents and two brothers) received confirmation of his death from the U.S. Embassy.

Local police said robbery might have been the motive. The Taliban said it was behind the attack.

During a press conference on Aug. 9, Ron Flaming, director of international programs for MCC, said, "We don't know why the team was attacked and by whom."

The following individuals joined Flaming at a press conference in Akron, Pa., to answer questions: Ken Sensenig, MCC East Coast assistant director; Joe Manickam, Asia director for MCC, and John Williamson, incoming MCC country representative for India, Nepal and Afghanistan. Arli Klassen, director of MCC, was in Ethiopia meeting with church leaders but returned to the United States Aug. 10. Flaming described Lapp as someone who was always willing to help but also humble. Williamson, who spent time with Lapp in Afghanistan in July, said, "I felt like I was on holy ground" with Lapp, due to his dedication and love. Sensenig said that while Lapp's family was shocked by the news, they were aware that there are risks that go with this kind of service.

Flaming said MCC has one other staff person placed in Afghanistan and confirmed she was safe. MCC has not made any decisions about the future of this staff member in Afghanistan. "The whole issue of security of workers is an ongoing concern," he said. "We assess this on a regular basis."

He said IAM's security plan went through assessment by outside security analysts and scored high. IAM has worked in Afghanistan for more than 40 years, and Flaming said he hopes they continue their work there.

According to Religion News Service, IAM rejected Taliban claims that 10 staffers from the Christian aid agency who were killed in Afghanistan had been trying to convert Muslims.

"Our faith motivates and inspires us, but we do not proselytize. We abide by the laws of Afghanistan," Dirk R. Frans, IAM's executive secretary, said in a statement on Aug. 9.

Williamson said that some organizations in countries like Afghanistan have guards with weapons. "MCC would be reluctant to do that," he said. MCC partnered with IAM because they have similar views on nonviolence and do not use or carry weapons.

In a phone interview on Aug. 9, Flaming said he was concerned when some media outlets ask, "Isn't this an example of the terrible things Muslims are doing?"

"Glen would want us to know that the vast majority of Afghans are desperate for peace," Flaming said. "They are deeply mourning the people they love. It's a deep loss for them as well." For some remote areas of Afghanistan, this is the only medical care they had access to, he said.

Lapp had been in Afghanistan with MCC since 2008. His two-year term was scheduled to end in October. He wrote this in a report: "Where I was [Afghanistan], the main thing that expats can do is be a presence in the country, treating people with respect and with love and trying to be a little bit of Christ in this part of the world."

Lapp was the son of Marvin and Mary Lapp and a member of Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster. He was a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. A memorial service was held Aug. 15 at Bright Side Baptist Church in Lancaster.
—*Anna Groff*

Note: *Anna Groff viewed the news conference in Akron, Pa., via CNN's live streaming on Aug. 9.*

Prison ministry nurtures sisterhood

Jailhouse Sisters only allowed to bring Bibles when they visit the prison

For 23 years, Ethel Umble visited female inmates in a county jail in Elkhart, Ind., as she participated in the Jail Sisters Ministry sponsored by women at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. She still enjoys friendship with them beyond the jail cell.

Today, three of the former inmates are out of jail and living in their communities. Umble, who is approaching 90, keeps in touch regularly and occasionally lunches with them. She also accompanies one of these friends, who has been diagnosed with cancer, to a chemotherapy clinic.

"They have become real friends, and I consider them to be my sisters in Christ," Umble says. "The prison system is based on a 'three strikes and you're out' mentality, but the ministry taught me that God calls us to something different—to justice and compassion based on rehabilitation and redemption, not punishment."

Umble is one of many women involved in Jailhouse Sisters who has experienced how in Christ strangers can become friends. Since the ministry was founded in 1980, groups of women have provided Sunday worship services once a month. Currently, 12 women divide into teams to lead services in the jail on a rotating basis.

"This ministry has changed me," says June Gingerich Yoder, a school nurse who joined the ministry several years ago. "I've become much less judgmental of people who are struggling.

This ministry has changed me. I've become much less judgmental of people who are struggling.—June Gingerich Yoder

"I serve so many families dealing with drug issues. But since I've been in the jails, I've become an advocate for finding new ways of rehabilitating. I think our punitive methods for dealing with people aren't working and only cause a lot of recidivism."

Yoder is often the designated prayer person for her Sunday. She begins praying a week ahead of time. She prays on the drive to the jail and silently prays for the inmates during worship. The designated prayer person also brings prayer requests from the women—many of whom are incarcerated for financial or drug crimes—back to the College Mennonite faith community.

Betty Yoder, who visits inmates one-on-one every Wednesday afternoon, recalls feeling hesitant when she began her involvement with the Jail Sisters ministry.

Everett J. Thomas

Nine of 12 "jailhouse sisters" placed their Bibles on a table at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 15. Their Bibles are the only articles allowed when they visit prisoners.

"The first day I was scheduled to go into the facility, I struggled with wanting to cancel my commitment," Yoder says. "The thought of going into a place I'd never been before or talking to women with whom I had nothing in common felt scary.

"But as I wrestled with God about my ambivalence, God reminded me how much I'd been blessed with love and that it was time I shared that love with others."

She decided to go, and as the big door clanged behind her she found women who spoke a common language, longing for unconditional love and healing.

"I listen to their stories, and we pray together," Yoder says. "Some of their struggles seem so insurmountable. I try to let them know that God loves them so very, very much."

Over the years, new restrictions have brought changes to the Jail Sisters' visits. Today, unlike in the past, the Jail Sisters are not allowed to touch the women they are visiting—such as holding hands when praying or hugging goodbye.

Rose Widmer, interim team leader at College Mennonite, has watched the ministry blossom over the years since it was founded 30 years ago by Dorothy McCammon, Verna Troyer, Rachel Fisher and Nancy Lapp.

"[Their] model of simply being there for people and going where they are rather than having them come to us, exemplifies what it means to open ourselves up to others and to God without having to have everything figured out beforehand," Widmer says.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson for Mennonite Church USA*

Volunteers make San Antonio home

Over the past three years, 12 volunteers have arrived and 11 stayed after term.

Cara Rufenacht

Mary Nan Ollis, left, discusses a client's file with co-worker Sima Pearose.

Mennonite Voluntary Service participants have been journeying to San Antonio, Texas, to serve for 25 years. For many volunteers, this was a one-way trip. Since the beginning of the MVS program in San Antonio, some short-term volunteers have chosen to stay and make San Antonio home, but in recent years, the retention rate has increased. Over the past three years, a dozen young adult volunteers have arrived. Eleven of them have stayed after their service.

"For some volunteers, coming to San Antonio and being embraced by the church community feels like the first time, as adults, that they are finding their place in the church," says Rachel Epp Miller, San Antonio Mennonite Church (SAMC) pastor.

"It is hard to imagine SAMC without MVS," says Epp Miller. "Our histories are quite parallel, and within the first few years of the church, the MVS unit was formed. Quite a number of our active, long-term members came with MVS and stuck around."

The congregation sees MVS as an integral part of their work in the community, and MVSers feel welcomed and cared for by members of the congregation.

"What we've learned is that these volunteers, to a large extent, are the face of Mennonites in San Antonio," says Epp Miller. "That's a huge responsibility and a gift for our volunteers to be able to carry the Mennonite theology and faith into the city."

Volunteers are invited to use their own gifts within the church.

"Our church worship is enhanced because we are all involved in each other's lives throughout the week," says Epp Miller. "A large part of our identity is living life together."

This connection to the church and the relationships that develop out of it are often a key factor in the decision to remain in San Antonio.

"People from the congregation are my main support network," says Mary Nan Ollis, who served with MVS from 2007 to 2009. "Whether it be an impromptu potluck or movie night or a Sunday service, there is great fellowship within the church."

Danielle Miller came to MVS from Holdeman Mennonite Church in Wakarusa, Ind., in the fall of 1997 and planted seeds that would root her in San Antonio for the years to come. Miller began in 1997 as a volunteer with the Service and Learning in San Antonio program, which would later merge with DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection). Today, Miller is city director for DOOR San Antonio.

"I believe I learned more in my three years in MVS than I have in any other period of my life," says Miller.

SAMC also serves as the office for two MVS staff members, MVS program director Hugo Saucedo and MVS unit administrator Kristen Mast, a former MVSer—*Hannah Heinzekehr of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Activist groups strategize for Pittsburgh 2011

Mennonite Church USA leaders may provide discussion rooms with facilitators.

Groups advocating for the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals in Mennonite Church USA gathered for a strategy summit May 21-22 at the Chicago Community Mennonite Church.

Representatives from Brethren Mennonite Council (BMC) for LGBTQ interests, Pink Menno, MennoNeighbors and Open Letter (see box) pastors met. The purpose of the summit was to plan for a presence at the Mennonite Church USA convention and delegate assembly to be held July 4-9, 2011, in Pittsburgh.

On Aug. 6, Carol Wise of BMC said one purpose of the summit was to "begin to understand more fully and address the tension that has sometimes existed between communities of color and the LGBTQ community."

Cynthia Lapp and Karl Shelly of the Open Letter pastors group emailed a statement on Aug. 10: "Justice and inclusion of LGBT folks is one important part of that work. We also talked about immigration and ways to work at racism in the church as well as in justice movements like ours."

At Columbus 2009, the Pink Menno campaign held a press conference, sponsored seminars, film viewings and hymn sings.

"We'd like to have a bigger, even more vibrant effort over the next year," said Luke Yoder, a Pink Menno founder, on Aug. 3. "There would be things people could do in anticipation of and preparation for Pittsburgh."

Pink Menno started primarily with college and congregational networks. The groups hope to broaden their network for Pittsburgh 2011. At the May summit, participants decided to work on a national campaign for the months leading up to Pittsburgh 2011. Yoder described tentative plans for the campaign as a national effort in which people in congregations can plug into a broader movement calling for the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals.

Yoder said the merged group hopes to continue in the same vein as the campaign last year: "visible, participatory, joyful, playful," but not confrontational. Also, they hope to build on the convention theme, "Bridges to the Cross."

Wise described what each group offers a broader movement: "Pink Menno brings the energy, passion and leadership of youth and young adults," she said. "Open Letter pastors bring their wisdom, access to formal church structures, and theological and pastoral skills. Individuals from the MennoNeighbors listserv bring their local experience and insights gained from an engagement with a variety of church issues. And BMC brings a long history of commitment to the LGBT community, education, resources and a persistence in working within the Mennonite church."

As far as informing Mennonite Church USA about plans for Pittsburgh, Wise said, "my assumption would be that leadership will certainly be informed of our general intentions. ... We have already initiated communication—for example, we notified denominational leadership about the [summit].

"I would welcome a more mutual engagement and think it is past time for church leadership to take more responsibility for a more genuine conversation," Wise said.

Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA executive director, said on Aug. 16 Executive Leadership has had informal conversations with the summit leaders and anticipates more.

"We would like to develop some agreements about the way these groups will carry on activities at the convention," Stutzman said.

"We have talked about the idea of providing a place, perhaps a designated room, where adults could discuss a number of difficult resolutions that the delegates have passed recently," said Stutzman. "That could include resolutions on immigration, human trafficking, health care and 'following Christ and growing together as communities even in conflict.' ... We would also provide facilitators to help keep the discussion balanced and respectful."—*Anna Groff*

Glossary of group names

MennoNeighbors is a network of individuals and congregations that provides support and discusses theology, beliefs and practices of Mennonite Church USA. Website: www.mennoneighbors.org/mailman/listinfo/neighbors

Open Letter is an open letter written in 2008 calling for inclusion of LGBTQ members in Mennonite Church USA; 83 signers currently hold ministerial credentials in Mennonite Church USA. Website: www.openlettertomcusa.org/

Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests is a network for Mennonite and Brethren lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied members. Website: www.bmclgbt.org

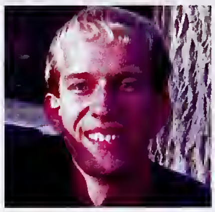
Pink Menno is a campaign that supports the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in marriage, in ordination and in Mennonite Church USA. Website: www.pinkmenno.org/

Youth conventions pave road for faith journeys

Young adults will return because of convention experiences as youth.

High school senior **Doran Stucky** was enjoying worship, service projects and late nights at the 2007 Mennonite Church USA youth convention in San José, Calif., when the Call Wall stopped him in his tracks.

"I discovered the Call Wall, a giant board where people could list the names of young people they felt had gifts for ministry," Stucky says. "I was really surprised to see my name listed three times.



Doran Stucky

"About that time, I was questioning whether I should go into graphic design. … But when I saw my name on the Call Wall, it got me thinking more seriously about pursuing ministry instead." Still not sure he should abandon his earlier dreams, he majored in graphic design during his freshman year at Northern State University in Aberdeen, S.D. But God and others continued to tap him on the shoulder, so he transferred to Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., where he is pursuing a double major in philosophy and theology, with hopes of attending seminary.

Stucky is just one of thousands of Mennonite teenagers for whom youth conventions have paved the way for future ministry and deeper engagement with the wider church. Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, says that 4,000 to 5,000 teenagers—about one-third of the denomination's youth groups—attend the biennial conventions.

"The amazing stories I hear year after year from youth about their convention experience keep me passionate about my work," she says.

The young adults sharing their stories below plan to attend the next youth convention in July 2011:

Shé Hall

Shé Hall, 26, a member of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., attended conventions in Orlando, Fla., (1997), St. Louis (1999) and Nashville, Tenn (2001). Prior to Calvary she attended an African-American Baptist church. So the Mennonite-Anabaptist flavor of her new congregation and the conventions was eye-opening.

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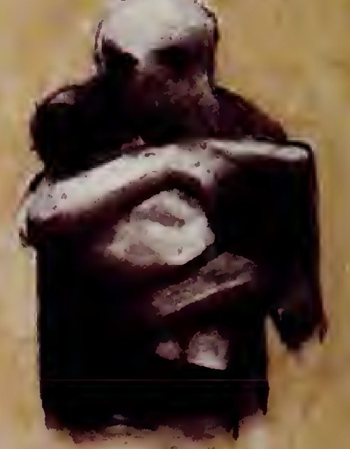

The Prodigal Son, by Charlie Mackesy

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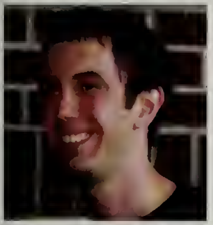
"Going to convention the first time with my youth group from Calvary opened my eyes to how big and diverse God's kingdom really is," says Hall, who is now pursuing her master's degree in communication at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Va.

"I saw people had many ways to praise the Lord, even though we were all there for the same thing—to worship God. It didn't matter what roads we took to get there. Once we were there, we were family."

Now on the youth planning committee for Pittsburgh 2011, she's gained a new perspective.

"I see all the thought and prayer that go into the convention before the youth get there," she says. "Committee members want to ensure we are allowing God to lead us into a theme that will both honor God and engage participants."

Conventions aren't meant to be job fairs. But **Nathan Grieser**, 24, discovered at Columbus 2009 that a little bit of community can go a long way in opening doors.


Nathan Grieser

The summer after Grieser graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College he attended Columbus as a delegate. While at convention, he had a phone interview for a live sound position, but they wanted him to start at a date not possible for him.

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Grieser had been job searching in the Lancaster, Pa., area, because it was where his fiancée, Kate Derstine, had a job, and they planned to live there after their wedding in October. In addition to looking for work in the music industry, he was exploring options for youth ministry, inspired by his experiences as a summer pastoral intern with the Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP).

"My parents were at Columbus, volunteering with the children," he says. "We happened to run into a family friend, Stan Shantz, lead pastor at James Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster. We got to talking about my distressing job search. Stan was sharing a room with Brian Miller, lead pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite Church in Lancaster, who was looking for a youth pastor. The next day I met with him. I interviewed several weeks later and was voted in two weeks before our wedding."

Three days after their honeymoon, he began as youth pastor at Sunnyside and plans to take his youth group to Pittsburgh 2011.

When **Amy Gingerich**, 33, attended Orlando 1997, she submitted an idea to the convention newspaper for the top 10 convention pranks. Her prank idea was to rearrange all the price tag stickers on books in the convention bookstore. Gingerich finds irony in the fact that she is now editorial director for Herald Press, which is responsible for the convention bookstore along with its parent, Mennonite Publishing Network.

Amy Gingerich

"What a hoot to be shown that old newspaper," says Gingerich, who will work in the bookstore at Pittsburgh 2011. "But behind the humor is a serious note. Conventions were a big part of my growing up and shaped the choices I've made in my adult life."

Gingerich, a member of Friendship Mennonite Church in Bedford Heights, Ohio, has attended all but two of the Mennonite conventions held since Ames 1985. She grew up as a preacher's kid, the daughter of Firman and Susan Gingerich, and conventions were woven into their lifestyle.

Gingerich, who graduated from Goshen College in 1999, says she believes that families provide important modeling.

"A study on faith formation said the most determining factors on passing on faith are not mission trips and conventions but modeling about faith in the home," she says. "I was doubly blessed because my family modeled the importance of participating both in our local congregation as well as at the denominational level during conventions.

"Conventions link the faith of kids from Kalona, Iowa, with the faith of kids from South Texas or Chicago," she says. "They help youth build faith around friendships and fellowship across the church, rather than in a tight little circle."—*Laurie Oswald Robinson for Mennonite Church USA*

Financial indicators show improvement

Mennonite Church USA audits show net gains in 2010 after losses in 2009.

Audit reports from the fiscal year ending (FYE) Jan. 31 show that, overall, Mennonite Church USA's various agencies and entities are doing better financially than the year before.

For example, Mennonite Mission Network's net assets in FYE Jan. 31, 2009, showed a loss of $2,310,976, while FYE 2010 showed a gain of $748,035.

Others that had a net loss in FYE 2009 but a net gain in FYE 2010 include Church Extension Services, Inc. (CES); The Mennonite, Inc.; Mennonite Health Services Alliance (its FYE is Dec. 31, 2009); and Mennonite Women USA.

Although Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership (EL), Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Mutual Aid (its FYE is Dec. 31, 2009) showed a net loss in FYE 2010, in all cases it was a much smaller one than they experienced in FYE 2009.

For example, EL's net loss in 2009 was $237,957 but only $23,599 in 2010. MPN's numbers, respectively, were $267,151 and $135,308, while MMA's were $3,268,695 and $82,225.

Mennonite Men's net assets remained positive in both years, with a slight increase this past year.

"I am pleased with the financial indicators for FYE 2010; the numbers look a lot better than they did in 2009," says Glen Guyton, director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA.

"I am thankful for the finance team and others who have worked hard to reduce expenses and keep an eye on our financial practices. And I am especially thankful for the members of Mennonite Church USA who showed their faithfulness and their faith in the church through continuing to give in spite of the poor economy," Guyton says.

I am pleased with the financial indicators for FYE 2010; the numbers look a lot better than they did in 2009.—Glen Guyton

The area in which the most positive change occurred for EL, Mission Network and MHS Alliance was in investment income. (A large part of this, however, is tied to annuities and endowments and is not part of the operating budget.) EL's investment income went from a loss of $120,335 in 2009 to a gain of $88,310 in 2010. Mission Network's went from a loss of $1,304,775 to a gain of $924,904. And MHS Alliance's went from a loss of $124,164 to a gain of $122,749.

CES, whose investment income was positive in both years, showed much less in 2010 ($6,787, compared with $33,412 in 2009).

Mennonite Education Agency operates on a fiscal year ending June 30, so its numbers for 2010 are not yet available.

"Individuals and congregations across the church continue to support God's mission even through challenging economic times," says Paula Killough, senior executive for advancement for Mission Network. "Because of contributions and estate giving alongside expense reduction, Mission Network has been able to support ministry and mission in North America and around the globe.

"We celebrate the generous spirit of all who have heeded the call of mission."

EL and Mission Network also showed a positive increase in income from estate/bequests.

Most of the agencies and entities reduced their expenses in FYE 2010, including staff cuts. However, with severance pay, these may show up more in the next fiscal year's numbers. The report of these financial indicators is available at www.mennoniteusa.org/Portals/0/EL/MCUSA_Funding-Analysis_FinancialIndicators_2010July22s.pdf—*Mennonite Church USA*

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Conrad Grebel University College invites applications for a full-time continuing contract faculty position in undergraduate History and graduate Theological Studies at the University of Waterloo, with a teaching and research specialty in sixteenth century Anabaptism and Mennonite History. The appointment will begin **July 1, 2011** at either the Assistant or Associate Professor level. The College will begin reviewing applications on **November 15, 2010**. The College is committed to employment equity. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. For further information about the position, qualifications, and application procedures please visit:

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Stutzman announces new leadership cabinet

Team members will focus on churchwide priorities, work out of five states.

Ervin Stutzman, who began Jan. 1 as executive director of Mennonite Church USA, has named his new leadership cabinet. This team will focus its work on the four churchwide priorities approved by the Executive Board in 2006: witness, antiracism, leadership development and global connections. Team members will work out of five states—Kansas, Texas, Indiana, Ohio and Virginia.

"It's a new thing to focus the roles of the cabinet members around the stated priorities of the church, while also maintaining the core services," says Stutzman, who works in Virginia.

These appointments conclude a comprehensive workplace review that Stutzman initiated in the spring as part of a six-month process of "listening around the church." The review included all Mennonite Church USA staff members employed directly by the offices that Stutzman supervises but did not include agencies of Mennonite Church USA, which conduct their own reviews. Stutzman's goal was to complete the appointments by Sept. 1. Here is the new cabinet:

Shelley Buller—executive assistant. Buller coordinates Stutzman's schedule and plans logistics for the Executive Board and Constituency Leaders Council. She works as part of a six-person team to plan Stutzman's travels, particularly those involving church relations. Buller has served in her present position as executive assistant for 32 years (formerly serving the General Conference Mennonite Church) and works in Newton, Kan.

Glen Guyton—associate executive director for constituent resources. Guyton oversees the finance, convention planning, information technology, intercultural relations and resource advocacy departments. He also will give leadership to the churchwide priority of antiracism work. This summer he moved to San Antonio, Texas, and will work from the DOOR house.

Marty Lehman—associate executive director for churchwide operations. Lehman oversees the church relations, communications, development and human resources departments. She also works with The Corinthian Plan, Church Extension Services and the Historical Committee. She is responsible to coordinate alignment among the various churchwide agencies. Lehman has worked for Mennonite Church USA since 2004 and now works out of the Elkhart, Ind., office.

André Gingerich Stoner—director of holistic witness, director of interchurch relations. Stoner will help nurture a web of evangelism, justice and peace witness throughout the church, working closely with Mennonite Mission Network staff. He will give leadership to the churchwide priorities of witness and the interchurch dimension of global connections. Stoner has served as director of interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA on a part-time basis since 2005. He has been part-time pastor of missions at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind., since 1994, where he provided leadership for the congregation's varied and numerous outreach and witness efforts. He will end that role in October as he transitions to full-time work for Mennonite Church USA. Stoner works out of the Elkhart office.

Terry Shue—director of leadership development. Shue will give attention to the leadership development priority, seeking to invigorate the Culture of Call and develop connections with ministry training programs as well as business leaders. He also will oversee the ministerial calling system and supervise a denominational ministry team. He will work from an office at the Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio.

Lee Lever, who has been serving as director of denominational ministry and interim director of the denominational ministry team, will end his service Sept. 30.—*Annette Brill Bergstresser for Mennonite Church USA*

Conrad Grebel
University College

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The Board of Governors of Conrad Grebel University College invites applications and/or nominations for the position of President, expected to be effective **July 1, 2011.**

Conrad Grebel University College is a liberal arts college founded by the Mennonite Church, affiliated with the University of Waterloo, and grounded by its Christian identity and Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated ability for engaging various communities in fostering:

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The College is committed to employment equity. Preference will be given to candidates who stand within the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition and have earned a doctorate.

All inquiries will be kept in strict confidence. Applications and resumes should be received by **November 1, 2010** and be addressed to:

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Profile and other details are found at
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Why do so many not know the Bible?

Every year since 1995, Wheaton College—one of America's preeminent evangelical schools—has tested the Bible knowledge of incoming freshmen students. These students are among the best and brightest of Christian youth in the United States. Most come from strong churches and have a long history of involvements in Sunday schools, youth groups, camps and mission trips. They are students "who are the most intentional about cultivating their faith," says Wheaton New Testament professor Gary Burge.

Despite this, many do poorly on the Bible test. They can't put Bible events in order—they don't know that Abraham came before the Old Testament prophets, that the prophets preceded the death of Christ or that Christ died before Pentecost.

They find it hard to identify biblical characters such as the apostles or name the thief released by Pontius Pilate. They struggle to locate stories such as Paul's missionary travels in the book of Acts or the Passover story in Exodus.

"We tend to assume that because they come from strong churches, they know the details of the biblical story," says Burge. "But students tell me after they take the test that they didn't have a clue."

Wheaton isn't the only school where students lack basic Bible knowledge; something similar is happening at Hesston (Kan.) College.

At Hesston, all students who want to graduate from the college have to take a biblical knowledge test as part of a biblical literature course. As at Wheaton, the test shows that many are unfamiliar with the Bible; it is common for most students to get 10 or fewer correct answers out of 50 questions.

Bible instruction today is episodic, looking at a few favorite passages out of context … most teaching is based on felt needs.—Gary Burge

"They know some individual Bible stories, but the majority don't know how the whole story fits together," says Michele Hershberger, who teaches in Hesston's Bible and ministry department.

Their lack of Bible knowledge is "pretty startling," says Marion Bontrager, who also teaches Bible at Hesston.

"Many are unable to sequence major characters or events, and they have no sense of how things are connected," he adds.

Dan Epp-Tiessen, who teaches Bible at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba, finds that things aren't much different in Canada.

"Biblical literacy is pretty low," he says of the students he teaches. "They don't know the story."

He notes that students who attended Christian high schools know more than others, but their understanding is still only "vague."

How did we get into this situation? Burge believes most of the blame can be laid directly at the feet of local congregations.

"The problem starts at the church level," he says. "Bible instruction today is episodic, looking at a few favorite passages out of context. … Most teaching is based on felt needs. They never get the story line from front to back."

Bontrager agrees.

"There's a disjointed approach to learning about the Bible," he says. "They are taught a bunch of individual stories without seeing how they connect to each other."

Karen Jones, author of *Transforming Student Ministry: Research Calling for Change*, echoes those sentiments.

"There are key passages and books that we faithfully teach [to youth]," Jones writes in the May 8, 2006, issue of the *Southern Baptist Texan*, "but large portions of Scripture that we overlook or only mention in passing."

Youth "rarely complete an in-depth study of the entire Bible," she said. "Whether it is intentional or not, the result is the same; our teenagers often leave our ministries with an incomplete understanding of biblical truth."

Of course, just knowing certain Bible facts doesn't make someone a better Christian. As Hershberger puts it, "just knowing information about the Bible isn't transformative." But, she says, without knowing the basics of the faith, "we're lost."

What's the solution? Burge believes that churches need to take a "curricular approach that tells the story." Without such an approach, he believes, young people won't be able to assess the Bible and apply it to their lives.

"They can't do analysis about something they really don't understand," he says.

Hershberger agrees. At Hesston she walks students through the whole Bible story beginning with the creation account in Genesis and ending in Revelation. Through it all she seeks to help them answer this question: How has God worked in history to heal all the broken relationships caused by sin, a rescue that culminates in the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus?

Along the way they provide visual and mental "hooks" to help them remember not only the stories but the sequence and how they fit into the big picture.

But helping youth learn the Bible is about more than better teaching in Sunday school, Hershberger says. Adults also play a role.

"If we want to make the Bible come alive for youth, we have to make it a priority as adults," she says. "If we are on fire about learning our faith, it will help youth be more excited."

Reading the Bible to young children is also important, Bontrager says.

"The key is the home," he says. "Students who said their parents read the Bible to them as children score highest on our test."

In 1999, Burge wrote a seminal article in *Christianity Today* titled, "The Greatest Story Never Told." In it he recounted how he asked youth leaders whether their students were learning the content of the faith and the stories of the Bible.

"'It is hard to find time,'" one told him. "'But I can say that these kids are truly learning to love God.'"

"That is it in a nutshell," Burge wrote. "Christian faith is not being built on the firm foundation of hard-won thoughts, ideas, history or theology. Spirituality is being built on private emotional attachments. Is it any wonder then that our young people and adults do not know the stories of the Bible? That they cannot reason theologically?"

No one, he went on to say "is teaching them. No one is modeling it for them. No one is announcing that the biblical story is The Story that defines our identity and life in the church."—*John Longhurst for Mennonite Publishing Network*

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Q&A: why read the Bible

Ervin R. Stutzman, executive director for Mennonite Church USA, shares his passion for knowing the Bible and its story with John Longhurst of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Why is it important to know the Bible?
The Bible provides both a window and a mirror for us. Through the window of Scripture, we see God's will and purpose, both for the world and for God's people. In the mirror, we see reflections of who we are. The Bible stories do not shrink back from reflecting the reality and shortcomings of our human state, but they also hold up hope for what we could become in Christ. Without continually being exposed to God's revelation in Scripture, we will lose a biblical worldview. Unless we gain biblical literacy, we will lose our way as a people of God.

What's been your experience with Bible study?
My experience of Bible study has been shaped by my role as a dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., for nearly a decade, and as an ordained minister and preacher for more than 30 years. Another important way it has been shaped is by teaching a men's Bible study at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg. We meet weekly on Tuesday mornings for breakfast and a Bible study from September through May. The group averages about 60 men who come from a number of different congregations.

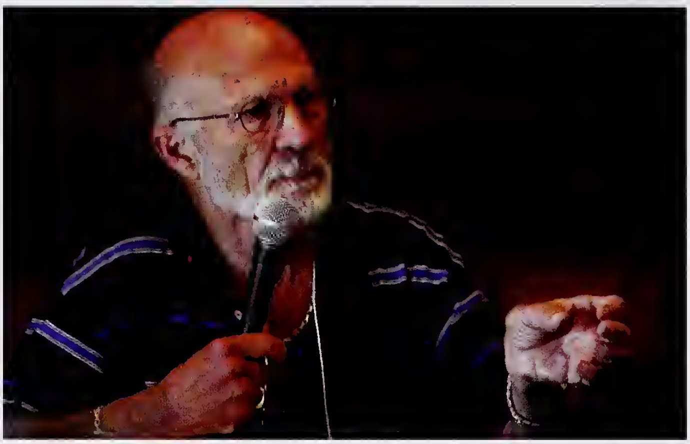
What is needed to help people learn more about the Bible?
We need a curriculum to guide our study, but we also need teachers and mentors who can make the Scriptures come alive under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We also need to change the way we view Bible study. Some only see the Bible as something to be discussed, debated and conquered through knowledge. I favor a formational approach that moves us toward seeing the Bible as an instrument in God's hand to help us become different people, growing into the image of Christ.

Are you hopeful for the future of Bible study?
I am encouraged to see that some congregations take seriously the task of engaging their youth groups in Bible study, and I sense that many churches are eager to be guided by the Scriptures. The recent experience of "Dwelling in the Word" in congregations and conferences across Mennonite Church USA is encouraging to me. Yet there is much more we could do. We need a comprehensive plan for study that involves our schools, churches and homes—a plan that keeps us engaged with and learning from Scripture over the whole span of life. I pray that God will show us new ways to teach the biblical story to our children and to let it guide our lives.

Thirty Christian faith traditions share the peace

AMBS hosts ecumenical peace conference, 'Peace Among the Peoples.'

Mark Gingerich



Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University speaks at the conference.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., hosted the ecumenical peace conference "Peace Among the Peoples" July 28–31. The conference had more than 20 co-sponsors and just over 200 registrants representing Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Free Church faith traditions.

Peace Among the Peoples has been part of a decade-long initiative of the World Council of Churches to help people overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. From May 17 to 25, 2011, the WCC will convene a worldwide gathering, the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, in Kingston, Jamaica, as a "harvest festival" to celebrate the achievements of the Decade to Overcome Violence, which began in 2001.

The Elkhart gathering drew together academics and grassroots people to focus on how their churches' theologies reflect and promote peace and justice. The conference was planned under the auspices of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, the research arm of AMBS.

Stanley Hauerwas, Duke University, and Gerard Powers, University of Notre Dame, dealt with "Just War and Pacifism in Dialogue." Powers focused on how the Catholic bishops in the United States "use the just war tradition to constrain strong tendencies in U.S. foreign policy toward a muscular unilateralism while pressing a broader ethic of peacebuilding that calls for much more responsible U.S. engagement for the global common good."

Hauerwas said Christian realism requires the disavowal of war. "Christians do not disavow war because it is often so horrible but because war, in spite of its horror, or perhaps because it is so horrible, can be so morally compelling. This is why the church does not have an alternative to war, but rather the church is the alternative to war."

Guillermo Kerber, a staff member of the WCC, Geneva, Switzerland, and Kent Yoder, a graduate of AMBS and a former staff member of the Decade to Overcome Violence, reported on the decade's impact. The WCC is working on a statement that would outline a more comprehensive and biblical notion of peace, one that goes beyond a classical and limited understanding of peacebuilding. It is this biblical and theological approach that has led toward an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, Kerber said.—*John Bender*

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Join us to celebrate the oldest Mennonite congregation of Amish-Mennonite origin in the U.S. as we reflect on God's work through our past and consider the challenges of our future. Fieldtrips, exhibits, and John Roth will share several times including *Planting Sequoias: Why I am Hopeful About the Future of the Anabaptist-Mennonite Tradition*. For program: Conestoga Mennonite Church, 2779 Main St., Morgantown, PA 19543; 610-286-9124; conestogamc@dejazzd.com

MEDA **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**
August 2010

MEDA invites applications for a full-time permanent Regional Director, Resource Development. MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) is an association of compassionate business women and men who invest in the lives of families living in poverty around the world. Our vision is that all people may experience God's love and unleash their potential to earn a livelihood, provide for families and enrich their communities. To find out more about MEDA, please visit our website at www.meda.org.

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The Regional Director, Resource Development will work to increase financial support for MEDA from new donors, existing donors, foundations and others in North America. The position will have responsibility for achieving major gift targets by raising donations for MEDA through cultivation, ongoing evaluation, and recognition of donors. The Regional Director, Resource Development will maintain professional and effective relationships with donors/ members/ investors through personal contacts, phone conversations, written communications, chapter meetings, conferences and other suitable means. This position will require regular travel within the U.S. Mid-West territory. The start date is October 2010.

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- Knowledge and skills in business principles with emphasis on marketing/sales.
- Excellent and proven interpersonal skills in relationship building, active listening, communicating, negotiation and leadership.
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- Understanding of the Moves Management system for cultivating gifts and investment funds.
- Knowledge and understanding of MEDA's constituency (Mennonite, Anabaptist and Christian business and professionals).
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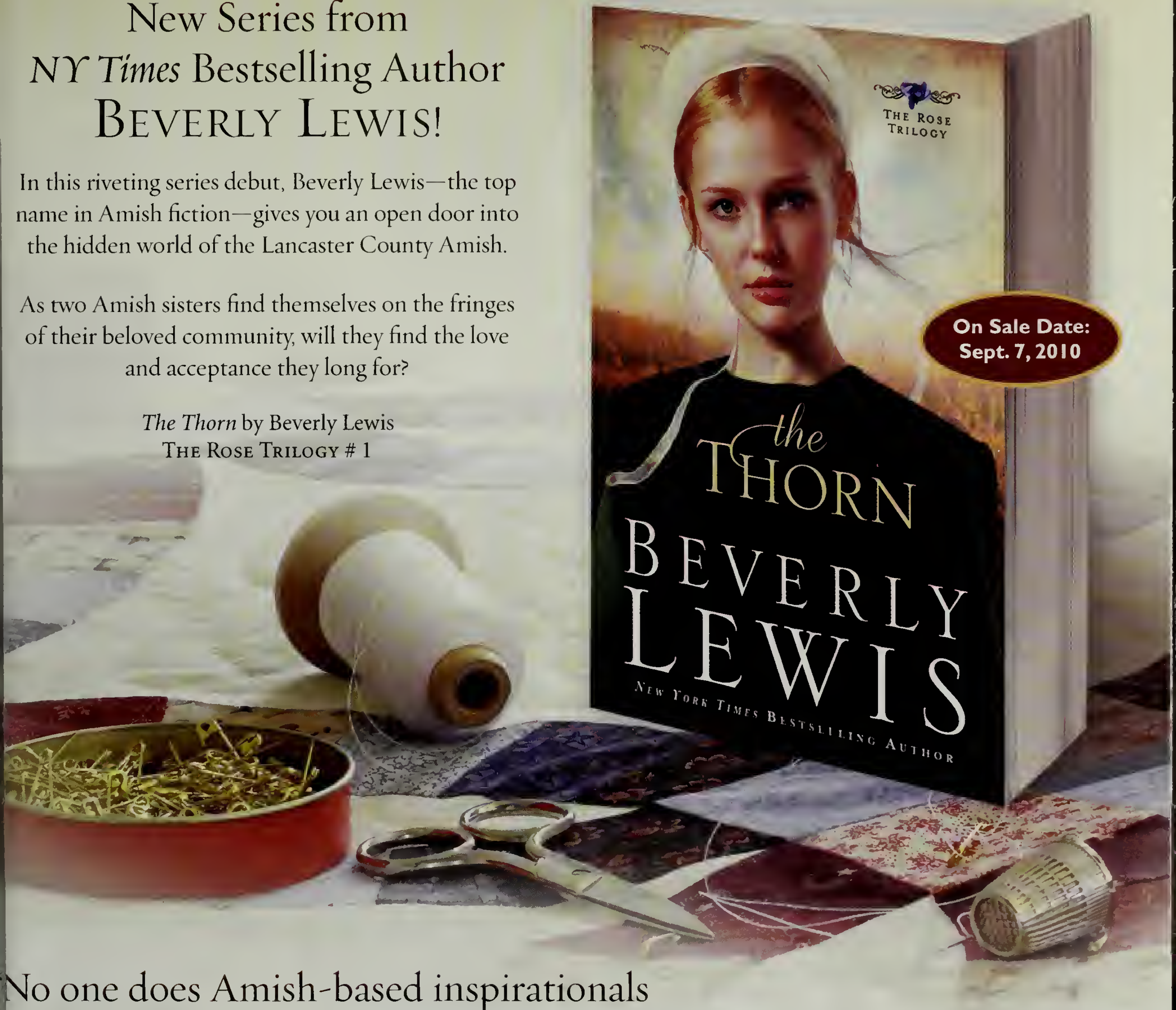
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No one does Amish-based inspirationals better than Lewis."—*Booklist*

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Lehman's Hardware employs 120 individuals, but the president of the store, Galen Lehman, did not know all their names.

When Lehman admitted this during the Values Based Leadership Program (VBLP) last fall, one of the resource people told him, "There's no excuse for that. You should know all 120 names."

"It became clear to me that I needed to be more relationship-based than task-oriented," Lehman says.

As one of his goals during the program, Lehman made a schedule to meet with each employee for ½ hour and do their job alongside them. Now Lehman still has trouble remembering all the 120 names, but he is improving.

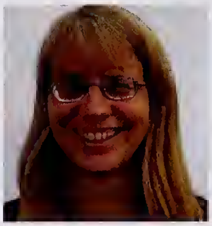
"I know where people grew up or that they have two dogs or a sick child," he said. "Those are the kinds of things you don't get if you sit in an office all day."

"Other training I've taken provided academic and theoretical learning, which was valuable," Lehman says. "VBLP provided emotional learning, which was invaluable. When I came back, people around me noticed an improvement in who I was and how I led."

Lehman, along with other leaders, participated in the 2009-10 Values Based Leadership Program of the Institute for Anabaptist Leaders. VBLP, held annually at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pa., offers two three-day sessions—one in September and one in February.

VBLP was the brainchild of Don Rittenhouse, Lee Schmucker, Ben Sprunger and Rick Stiffney. A pilot program in 2000 led to the first Institute for Anabaptist Leaders at Laurelville in 2002. (Go to laurelville.org to register.)

Arli Klassen, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee



What did you take away from VBLP?

I wanted to work more intentionally at "encouraging the heart." My board chair at that time bought me a beautiful red heart, and I've had it hanging in my office ever since then. My goal is to say something encouraging in every exchange I have with a staff member, board member or constituent, although I don't live up to my goal often enough.

Do you have a story to share from VBLP?

While I was at VBLP, the news reached me that Robb Davis, the executive director of MCC at that time, had abruptly resigned. I knew immediately that this would be a leadership crisis for MCC, and I worried out loud about this with the group. It was suggested to me later that same day that I should consider this role. That was something that took me many months to accept, but I feel that VBLP helped give me confidence in my leadership gifts to consider and eventually accept this request.

What makes this Anabaptist/Christian program different from secular leadership programs?

The pastors and church leaders kept us grounded and connected to our faith. The training leaders talked personally about their own faith journey as part of their leadership. Our own faith journey was intrinsically linked with our journeys as leaders.

Larry Zook, CEO of Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa.

What did you take away from VBLP?

We often referred to leadership as a journey, and since the VBLP I've at

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times sought to be encouraging to others on their leadership journeys by using this same phrase, recognizing that we are sojourning together and that the journey and the people we relate with along the way are as important as the end destination.

How has VBLP influenced you as a leader at Landis Homes?

The program strengthened my commitment to Anabaptist values and to maintaining and strengthening our Anabaptist identity at Landis Homes. Since organizations are made up of people, I've been committed since becoming CEO in January 2007 to offering the VBLP opportunity to two or three senior team or department directors each year.

Barbara Lehman Moyer, associate pastor, Park View Mennonite Church

How has VBLP influenced you?

VBLP helped me with my confidence, and I am learning to lead from my center, which we heard frequently during our sessions. Growing up in the '60s and '70s, I never had a female pastor to mentor me or model how to lead as a woman. When I attended seminary in the mid-'80s, all of us struggled with the challenges of how men and women were going to work separately or together in pastoral ministry and at the conference level. We are still working at that.

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What goals did you make for yourself?

One goal I continue to work on is in the area of "self - care." I felt led to ask two other women to explore with me the possibility of meeting regularly for prayer, accountability and sharing. It turned out to be one of the most life-giving things I have done. For four years, three of us women have met one evening a month for two or three hours.

Moniqua Acosta, program and member services manager, Mennonite Health Services Alliance

How has VBLP influenced you as a leader?

The program allowed me to feel confident with my work and the choices I make. I worked on a personal mission statement that guides me and serves as a foundation for my professional life. It is a work in progress and ever-evolving, but there is some power in putting a mission statement into writing. We all play a part in God's plans for our world, in our personal family lives and in our work lives. Tying all the pieces together was helpful to share with other believers.

How could VBLP be improved?

I would love to see more people of color as participants in the program. This can be challenging to do but it would benefit the program and participants. I come from a Spanish-speaking Mennonite church, where our styles of worship differ, and so having more diverse forms of worship would have helped me feel more a part of the group.

Sue Conrad, former associate pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

What did you gain from VBLP?

We were all assigned a partner with VBLP. We both live in Lancaster, so we were able to have our monthly check-ins in person (between the fall and winter sessions). Those times with Sandy were invaluable. It was helpful to meet with someone who was not in my specific field of work (pastoral ministry) yet who cared deeply for the church and had the same values for her work (in human resources for a retirement community.) Sandy and I hit it off so well, that we have continued to faithfully meet monthly for the past three years.—*Anna Groff*

Editor's note: Anna Groff participated in VBLP in 2009-2010

CALENDAR

Vincent Mennonite Church, 39 Seven Stars Road, Spring City, PA 19475, will be hosting a ***275th Anniversary Weekend and Homecoming Banquet Sept. 11-12***. Contact 610-948-6130; 610-948-2129; email: sbreidigan@juno.com or sbreidigan@rockhillmennonite.org for more information.

Join us for ***Frazer Mennonite Church's Centennial Celebration, Oct. 15-17*** in Frazer, Pa. Features include the release of FMC's commissioned book of its first 100 years, hearing from former pastors and bishops, recording your memories, viewing videos and displays, singing and fellowship. See www.frazermennonite.org for a detailed schedule of events. For questions or additional information, contact Harry King at info@frazermennonite.org or 610-644-3397.

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Friendship Community's free Harmony Concert at 7 p.m., Nov. 20. The concert will be held at the **Forest Hills Mennonite Church** located at 100 Quarry Road in Leola, Pa. The free-will offering will benefit Friendship Community, a nonprofit, Christian ministry serving people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

DEATHS

Aeschliman, Anna L. Stuckey, 91, Stryker, Ohio, died July 17 of dementia. Spouse: Hyrthal E. Aeschliman (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Sarah Eicher Stuckey. Children: Janice Kreider, Judy Davis, Betty Beck, David, Sue Groff; 12 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 22 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker.

Bauman, Erla Lucille Musselman, 80, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Aug. 3 of a heart attack. Spouse: Mervin Bauman (deceased). Parents: Abner and Gladys Burkhart Musselman. Children: Charlotte Campbell, Steven, Brian; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 7 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Burkey, Nancy Wenger, 69, Lebanon, Ore., died April 12. Spouse: Galen Burkey. Parents: Ira and Mildred Wyse Wenger. Children: Debra Nelson, Steven; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 16 at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Burkholder, J. Lawrence, 92, Goshen, Ind., died June 24. Spouse: Harriet Lapp Burkholder (deceased). Parents: Henry L. and Mary Seitz Burkholder. Children: Howard, Myrna Burkholder, Janet Friesen; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 30 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Covington, Robert Jean, 77, Goshen, Ind., died July 5. Spouse: Ruth Bertsche Covington. Spouse: Willie Melancon Covington (deceased). Parents: Blaine and Beulah Nettleton Covington. Children: Lynn Smith, Cindy Woods, Connie Jacober, Carla Oplinger; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Reith Rohrer Ehret Funeral Home, Goshen.

Delp, Ada G. Moyer, 84, Souderton, Pa., died July 23. Spouse: Alvin D. Delp (deceased). Parents: Harry and Sally Godshall Moyer. Children: Arlin M., Laverne M., Durrell M.; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at Rockhill Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Derstine, Mary Ellen M. Clemmer, 88, Franconia, Pa., July 7 of respiratory failure. Spouse: Dayton A. Derstine (deceased). Parents: Allen L. and Alice Moyer Clemmer. Children: Gladys Kolb, Mary Derstine, Florence Hunsberger, Lourene Bergey; 17 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 11 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Detweiler, Rudy J., 86, Burton, Ohio, died May 29 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Ann Marie Zimmerly Detweiler. Parents: Joseph and Lydia Yoder Detweiler. Children: Barbara Ann Miller, Mary Dunn, Sadie Buckwalter, Tim, Martha Earnest, Lois Earnest, Tom, Rudy Lee; 23 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Maple View Mennonite Church, Burton.

Diller, Ivan R., 87, Hesston, Kan., died July 18 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Doris M. Jantz Diller. Parents: Jacob R. and Grace D. Cooperider Diller. Children: Althea Harvey, Steve, Betty Jo Hague, Barbara Jean Martin; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Funk, Francis John, 77, Newton, Kan., died July 28 of an infection. Spouse: JoAnn Krehbiel Funk. Parents: Arnold E. and Edna Ruth Loganbill Funk. Children: Keith M., Mark R., Michelle K. Funk, Scott F., Elyse M. Boston; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Funk, Margaret Schroeder, 83, Altona, Manitoba, died July 20. Spouse: Menno Funk. Parents: H. H. and Maria Kehler Schroeder. Children: Marlene Permanand, Iris Kliewer, Kathryn Suderman, and Denise Voth; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 26 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Galle, Brent Clayton, 59, Moundridge, Kan., died July 10. Spouse: Kendra Lea Groth Galle. Parents: Gilbert D. and Mourine Mae Vogt Galle. Child: Glen; one grandchild. Funeral: July 14 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Godshall, Marian L. Moyer, 87, Telford, Pa., died July 3 of respiratory failure. Spouse: Elmer K. Godshall (deceased). Parents: Vincent and Mary Ellen Landis Moyer. Children: Arlen, Larry, Ray, Darlene Knox, E. Durrell, Lori Wesley; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 7 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Goering, Orlando J., 89, Moundridge, Kan., died July 8. Spouse: Violet H. Miller Goering (deceased). Parents: Benjamin B.J. and Anna Goering. Children: Arden, Diane Hanson, Janice Goering; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Hecker, Paul E., 87, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died July 7 following a year-long illness. Spouse: Virginia Bair Hecker (deceased). Parents: Melvin and Elva Immel Hecker. Children: Bonnie Hecker, Judy Green, Kathie Hothem, Paula Hecker; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek.

Horst, Joseph "Gordon," 88, Albany, Ore., died May 17. Spouse: Goldie Dirks Horst. Parents: Reuben and Martha Glick Horst. Children: Becky Siegrist, Helen Yoder, Rachel Yoder, Susan Beachy, David; 11 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 at Lebanon Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Ore.

Kauffman, Dale F., 78, Zanesfield, Ohio, died June 9 of lung cancer. Spouse: Irene Overholt Kauffman. Parents: David and Olive Hartzler Kauffman. Children: Carla Kauffman, David, Karen Landis; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 14 at South Union Mennonite Church, Logan County, Ohio.

Kehler, Ann Hildebrandt, 89, Altona, Manitoba, died July 17. Spouse: Abram F. Kehler. Parents: Heinrich and Anna Ens Hildebrandt. Children: Henry, Frank and Hilda Joyce Wieler; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 20 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Keidel, Eudene E. King, 89, Leo, Ind., died July 25. Spouse: Levi O. Keidel. Parents: Ed and Ida King. Children: Paul, Pricilla Miller, Perry, Ruth Clemens; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at Westview Alliance Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Klopfenstein, Wayne W., 88, Colorado Springs, Colo., died June 9. Spouse: Miriam Fink Klopfenstein. Parents: James G. and Mable Eicher Klopfenstein. Children: Dr. James, Ronald, Sharon Mullet, Linda Francis, Roger, Jack, Douglas; 20 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at Memorial Gardens Funeral Homes Chapel, Colorado Springs.

Leatherman, Marilyn L. Bechtel, 76, Perkasie, Pa., died July 9. Spouse: Earl D. Leatherman. Parents: Claytus N. and Lizzie L. Lewis Bechtel. Children: Patty Osterdahl, Marcia Wilson, Scott; seven grandchildren. Funeral: July 13 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie.

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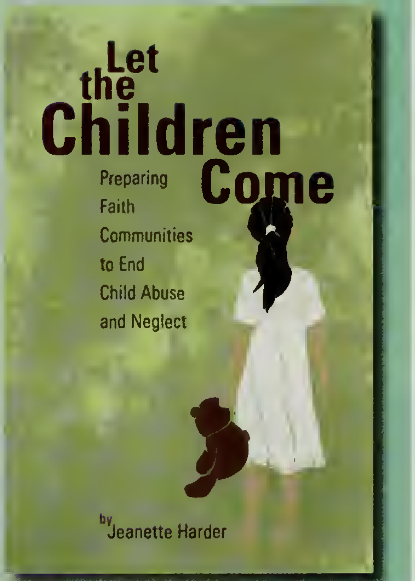

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Mann, John Emerson, 78, Goshen, Ind., died June 17. Spouse: Eleanor Jean Detwiler Mann. Parents: Clifford and Helen Ebersole Mann. Children: James R., Jay E.; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 21 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

McConnell, Dr. Fredeick W., Jr., 89, Woxall, Pa., died July 27. Spouse: Josephine Fackenthal McConnell. Parents: Rev. Frederick W., Sr., and Laura Sargent McConnell. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Metzger, Harold, 82, Floradale, Ontario, July 13 of cancer. Spouse: Fern Metzger. Parents: Moses and Priscilla Metzger. Children: Sheryl Frey, Ron, Rob; six grandchildren. July 17 at Floradale Mennonite Church.

Miller, Arthur H., 96, Landisville, Pa., died July 9. Spouse: Ethel Burkhart Miller. Parents: Martin R. and Ella Herr Miller. Children: Edwin B., Barbara Ann Brubaker, Dr. Richard B., J. Martin, Donald B.; 17 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 17 at Landisville Mennonite Church.

Miller, John J., 67, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 1 of a brain tumor. Spouse: Helen L. Kraybill Miller. Parents: Jacob E. and Polly J. Helmuth Miller. Children: Wendell, Frances. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Lancaster Mennonite School Fine Arts Center, Lancaster.

Moyer, Raymond Halteman, 90, Souderton, Pa., died July 6. Spouse: Anna W. Moyer Moyer. Parents: John and Anna Halteman Moyer. Children: David, Rose Bergey, Philip; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 11 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Moyer, Roberta B. Souder, 91, Souderton, Pa., died July 22 of liver cancer. Spouse: Russell F. Moyer (deceased). Parents: Wilmer B., Sr., and Marietta M. Bergey Souder. Children: Dolores Kratz, Sanford, Ferne Motto; eight grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 26 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Penner, Joetta Eck, 69, Inman, Kan., died July 8. Spouse: Paul Penner. Parents: Joe P. and Ruby Buller Eck. Children: Steve, Sheri Weaver; four grandchildren. Funeral: July 12 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Schettig, Mildred Moyer, 88, Hatfield, Pa., died July 16. Spouse: John H. Schettig (deceased). Parents: Laedon and Sallie Mae Dettra Moyer. Children: Barbara McDermott, Noreen Schettig, Kathy Schettig; six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 20 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Schmidt, Dorothy Lucille Green, 78, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Aug. 9 of complications following heart surgery. Spouse: Alvin Ray Schmidt. Parents: Winfield and Gladys Nichols Green. Children: Donna Prochazka, Diane Kirchner; three grandchildren; one great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 14 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Schrag, Delsie Mae, 94, Freeman, S.D., died July 7. Parents: Henry and Lena Schrag. Funeral: July 10 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Sutter, Elsie Elizabeth Eash, 90, Goshen, Ind., died June 28 after a lengthy illness. Spouse: Clayton Christ Sutter. Parents: Sem K. and Suie Blough Eash. Children: Sem Sutter, Miriam Lapp, Beth Sutter, Ruth Sutter; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 2 at East Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Thomas, Warren, 61, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 4 of complications from multiple myeloma. Spouse: Eva Thomas. Parents: Leon Myer and Jean Miller Thomas. Children: Ashley, Nadine. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Church of the Word, Lancaster.

Toews, Ed J., 82, Altona, Manitoba, died July 9. Spouse: Susan Toews. Parents: Jacob A. and Annie Hiebert Toews. Children: Sharon Loewen, Steve, Stew and Sandra; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 13 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Tuckerman, Dorothy M. Beck, 74, Angola, Ind., died July 30. Spouse: Marvin Tuckerman. Parents: Milton and Lucile Roth Beck. Child: Doug; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 4 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Welty, Ellen Louise Wagner, 86, McDonough, Ga., died July 4 of Parkinson's Disease. Spouse: Russell Ralph Welty. Parents: Seman and Ethel Wagner. Children: Dean, Timothy, Jeanene Wiens; eight grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 17 at Berea Mennonite Church, Atlanta, Ga.

Yoder, Esther Miller, 80, Kalona, Iowa, died July 16. Spouse: Edwin L. Yoder. Parents: Joas and Magdalena Ropp Miller. Children: Rodney, Bob, Eric, Melanie Schweitzer, Beth Schlabaugh, Celia French; five grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Yoder, H. Glenn, 79. Belleville, Pa., died Aug. 6. Spouse: Priscilla Glick Yoder. Parents: Dorsey V. and Bertha V. Yoder Yoder. Children: Linda K. Spicher, G. Curtis, Barbara E. Gers; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 10 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Yoder, Mary B. Hostetler, 89, Belleville, Pa., died July 11. Spouse: John M. Yoder (deceased). Parents: John Y. and Katie Yoder Hostetler. Children: Kay Selmer, Kermit Yoder; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 14 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Zacharias, Freda Ginter, 82, Altona, Manitoba, died July 16. Spouse: David Zacharias. Parents: William and Sara Goertzen Ginter. Child: Darlene Zacharias. Funeral: July 21 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

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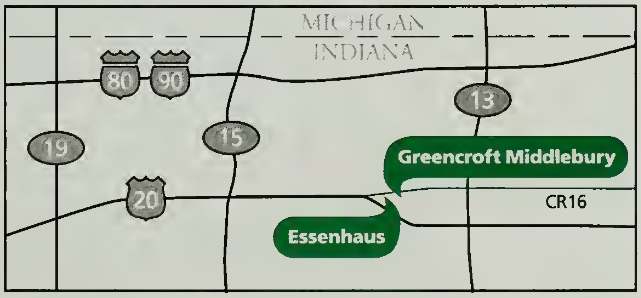

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Answers to the page 61 puzzle

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RESOURCES

A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity by Dawn Ruth Nelson (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $18.95) tells the story of 20th-century Mennonite agrarian spirituality through the lens of one woman's life and one seminary (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.).

At Powerline and Diamond Hill: Unexpected Intersections of Life and Work by Lee Snyder (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $14.95) tells the story of how a Mennonite farm girl, whose "closed" Oregon community prescribed a limited role for women and distrusted education, ended up a university president.

An American in Persia: A Pilgrimage to Iran by Richard A. Kauffman (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $12.95) tells stories of Kauffman's encounters with Iranians, their culture and their politics to give witness to ways walls can break down when the stories, culture and history of others are attended to.

Roots and Branches: A Narrative History of the Amish and Mennonites in Southeast United States, 1892-1992 by Martin W. Lehman (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $23.95) tells the story of Southeast Mennonite Conference into the 1960s. It is the first of two volumes. From its inception, SMC has been a diverse Mennonite denominational body including small churches rooted in mission and larger congregations of Sarasota, Fla., begun by Mennonites who moved south.

Storage Issues: Poems, 1988-2008 by Suzanne Kay Miller (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $12.95) pictures an individual wandering through the remains of a communal life. The poems search for meaning in the background, events and concerns of one Mennonite woman's existence.

Wayfaring: Essays Pleasant and Unpleasant by Alan Jacobs (Eerdmans, 2010, $18) offers essays for companionable wayfaring. These are a wayfarer's notes, a record of ideas and experiences encountered on the pilgrim path. The pieces are serious and comic, eloquent and interesting. Jacobs muses on the usefulness and dangers of blogging, the art of dictionary making, the world of Harry Potter and an appreciation of trees.

Amish Proverbs: Words of Wisdom from the Simple Life by Suzanne Woods Fisher (Revell, 2010, $13.99) collects more than 200 proverbs that uncover the rich heritage, folklore, faith, values, history and essence of the Plain People. These proverbs cover all aspects of life, from finances to faith to family, as well as overcoming life's frustrations. These proverbs help point us all toward wisdom and truth for everyday circumstances.

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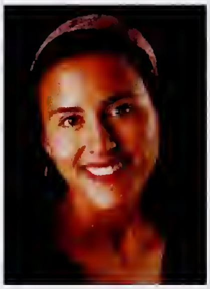
To talk before or after church?



Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz is a member of San Antonio Mennonite Church.

I waited with eager anticipation for the annual conference of the Western District Conference (WDC) July 9-11. I'm among the handful of young adults that attended without a delegate role, and I admit that it's become one of my favorite weekends of the year. Being a young, Latina, Mennonite woman among the majority of older, Kansas-raised, Germanic-cultural, Mennonite crowd was such a delight.

During this gathering, cultures met and provided a place for us to share about who we are, what God is doing in our lives and in our churches. We safely moved beyond our own cultural comfort zones and served each other with the diversity of our gifts. In past years, I've accepted the spontaneous request to read Scripture, interpret speakers and use my dramatic skills. This affirmation of who I am and my giftedness has given me courage to seek out new ways to use my other gifts.

In previous summers, the conference provided seminars or, as they call them, "learning communities" that participants and delegates can choose. Thanks to an online seminary course I took through Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., last fall, I planned a "learning community" titled "A New Mennonite Identity: Latino and Germanic in Conversation."

I submitted my final project earlier this spring to WDC leaders, and to my surprise, my project was chosen.

Even though my seminary course prepared me to understand my Germanic brothers and sisters' history and culture, I asked to work with someone who could publically provide the learning community with a balanced perspective. I was blessed to have Clarence Rempel, WDC's new conference minister, by my side.

Together we led the community, which included Latinos, Germanic and mixed-cultural ancestry Mennonites through a series of small-group brainstorming sessions discussing first their cultural values and second their Anabaptist values.

To encourage you to think about your own cultural values list, I'll provide here the most common examples from both Germanic and Latino Mennonites. Germanic Mennonites named the following values: hard work, frugality, tradition, family, education, order/structure, faith and service. Latino Mennonites named family, language, hospitality, food, fiesta, celebration, public image/private homes and faith/religion. Afterward, we compared the Latino and Germanic Mennonite cultural and faith values and found areas where misunderstandings and confusion can easily occur.

The group saw that even though our Anabaptist values on paper are the same, how we culturally interpret and apply them in our communities can look different.

For example, both groups value church community and church fellowship. But how that plays out is fascinating. According to the sharing within the group, Germanic Mennonites have the custom of arriving before the service begins to have time to build community among their members, and when the service ends, they expect a punctual finish and to be on their way home.

Even though our Anabaptist values on paper are the same, how we culturally interpret and apply them in our communities can look very different.

On the other hand, Latino Mennonites gave testimony of how they also value community and its fellowship. But even though they may arrive late to the service, they expect time for fellowship to occur at the conclusion of the service.

You can imagine the frustration this might produce and the judgment that may follow. Even though both groups share the same faith value, each community has found ways to live it out according to their cultural values.

At the end of our time together, Clarence gave a brief overview of U.S.-Germanic Mennonite history as it culminated in Kansas. I presented an introduction into U.S. Latino diversity, the waves of immigration to the United States and finally the history of Latinos in the Mennonite church, which spans close to 80 years.

As the Latino membership continues to grow exponentially within Mennonite Church USA and Germanic Mennonites decline (as demonstrated in Conrad Kanagy's study), conferences should provide safe places for both groups to learn, laugh and journey together. TM

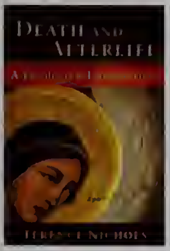
FILM REVIEWS

Inception (PG-13) showcases director Christopher Nolan's talent for creating an alternative world. In this one, a team of "extractors" who enter people's dreams to steal information try to plant an idea that will change the direction of an energy company. Despite the film's technical artistry, the story is muddled, with a succession of implausible gunfights, and fails to engage us emotionally.—*Gordon Houser*

The Secret in Their Eyes (R) is an Argentinean film that won last year's Oscar for best foreign-language film. A retired legal attorney writes a novel to find closure for a past unsolved homicide case and for his unreciprocated love with his superior—both of which haunt him decades later. This powerful film raises the question of how one confronts a seemingly empty life.—*gh*

The Kids Are All Right (R) follows the ups and downs of an unconventional family of lesbian mothers with two high school children. Despite the realistic dialogue and superb acting of Julianne Moore and Annette Benning, the plot remains shallow. However, the film demonstrates the resilience and power of families.—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS



Death and Afterlife: A Theological Introduction by Terence Nichols (Brazos Press, 2010, $22.99) addresses contemporary and perennial human questions about death and what lies beyond, making a Christian case for an afterlife with God. Nichols examines views of death and the afterlife in Scripture and the Christian tradition, then looks at scientific and philosophical challenges to the afterlife and what we can learn from near-death experiences. He tackles subjects—heaven, hell, purgatory—most avoid and argues that the soul can survive death and that bodily resurrection is possible.—*gh*

The power of books

In a time when the reading of books seems to be on the wane and being crowded out by use of the Internet, some research reveals that books retain a certain power.

In his July 9 column in *The New York Times*, David Brooks reports that in three successive years, researchers at the University of Tennessee "gave 852 disadvantaged students 12 books (of their own choosing) to take home at the end of the school year," then looked at those students' test scores.

Brooks writes: "They found that the students who brought the books home had significantly higher reading scores than other students. These students were less affected by the 'summer slide'—the decline that especially afflicts lower-income students during the vacation months. In fact, just having those 12 books seemed to have as much positive effect as attending summer school."

Earlier research in 27 countries showed that kids who grow up in a home with 500 books stay in school longer and do better. "This new study," Brooks writes, "suggests that introducing books into homes that may not have them also produces significant educational gains."

Contrast this news with a study by Jacob Vigdor and Helen Ladd of Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy, which examined computer use among a half-million 5th through 8th graders in North Carolina. "They found that the spread of home computers and high-speed Internet access was associated with significant declines in math and reading scores," Brooks writes.

This study agrees with others that show that broadband access is not necessarily good for kids and may be harmful to their academic performance. And these studies were done before the popularity of Facebook and Twitter.

Brooks refers to Nicholas Carr's book *The Shallows*, which argues that the Internet is leading to a short-attention-span culture. "[Carr] cites a pile of research showing that the multidistraction, hyperlink world degrades people's abilities to engage in deep thought or serious contemplation."

Others disagree with Carr and point to evidence that suggests that playing computer games and performing Internet searches actually improves a person's ability to process information and focus attention. The Internet, they say, is a boon to schooling, not a threat.

Brooks mentions an observation made by a philanthropist who gives books to disadvantaged kids: "It's not the physical presence of the books that produces the biggest impact, she suggested. It's the change in the way the students see themselves as they build a home library. They see themselves as readers, as members of a different group."

Brooks goes on to contrast the Internet culture, which is more egalitarian and oriented to gaining information, with the literary culture, which is more hierarchical (i.e., some know more than others) and oriented toward thinking critically.

Brooks writes: "The Internet culture may produce better conversationalists, but the literary culture still produces better students. It's better at distinguishing the important from the unimportant and making the important more prestigious."

But this way of contrasting cultures may be too simplistic. Certainly there are critical thinkers who use the Internet, and there are websites that encourage a literary culture.

Our culture, with its polarized conversations that are less arguments than shouting at each other, needs more critical thinking.

We Christians are people of a book, and that book has power to change us.

THESE READERS SUBMITTED ANSWERS

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Clara Bartel, Hydro, Okla.
Norma Bauman, Middletown, Ohio
Alice Berkey, Molalla, Ore.
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
J. Lester Brubaker, Lititz, Pa.
Barbara Burkey, Albany, Ore.
Ed & Carol Burkholder, Elkhart, Ind.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Betty G. Denlinger, Lititz, Pa.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Anette Eisenbeis, Marion, S.D.
Jeannie Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
John Gerlach, Landisville, Pa.
Martha B. Gingerich, Hartville, Ohio
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Faye Grater, Wauseon, Ohio
Rosalie Grove, Elkhart, Ind.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Amy Hershberger, Hesston, Kan.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
Lonnie & Shirley Hochstetler, Shipshewana, Ind.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Adeline R. Huebert, Henderson, Neb.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
June Kirkton, Chenoa, Ill.
Janice Kratzer, Dalton, Ohio
Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Erma Maust, Bay Port, Mich.
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Dave Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Doris Nelson, Wayland, Iowa
Elaine Newcomer, West Liberty, Ohio
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Rita Patterson, Valley Center, Kan.
Jennie Peters, Mt. Angel, Ore.
Imogene Plank, La Junta, Colo.
Melda Richer, Wauseon, Ohio
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Junia Schmidt, Hesston, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Florence Stauffer-Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.
Barbara Stoltzfus, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth Stoltzfus, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Ethan Stuckey, Archbold, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Shirley A. Toole, Goshen, Ind.
Betty Ulrich, Eureka, Ill.
Otis & Vera Unruh, North Newton, Kan.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Mary Helen Wade, Sterling, Ill.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marjorie Wideman, Akron, N.Y.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Mike Wilson, Petoskey, Mich.
Deloris Wyse, Goshen, Ind.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Florine Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Mira Yoder, Plainfield, Ill.
Ada J. Yoder, Nappanee, Ind.
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

Why show the answers?

"We much prefer that you wait to publish the answers to the crossword puzzle until a later issue, as was done in *OurFaith Digest* and as you did in *The Mennonite* until the last several issues. This eliminates any tendency to cheating."—*Bertha and Paul Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.*

This letter is similar to 10-12 we received from puzzlers wondering why we now include the answers in the same issue. We do so at the request of readers who share their copies of *The Mennonite* with others and never see them again (and, consequently, do not see the answers). We think this kind of sharing is good stewardship and wish to support it. We leave any "cheating" to the conscience of each puzzler. Answers to this month's puzzle may be found on page 56.—*Editor*

Jesus' teachings in Matthew

By Jeanette Baer Showalter

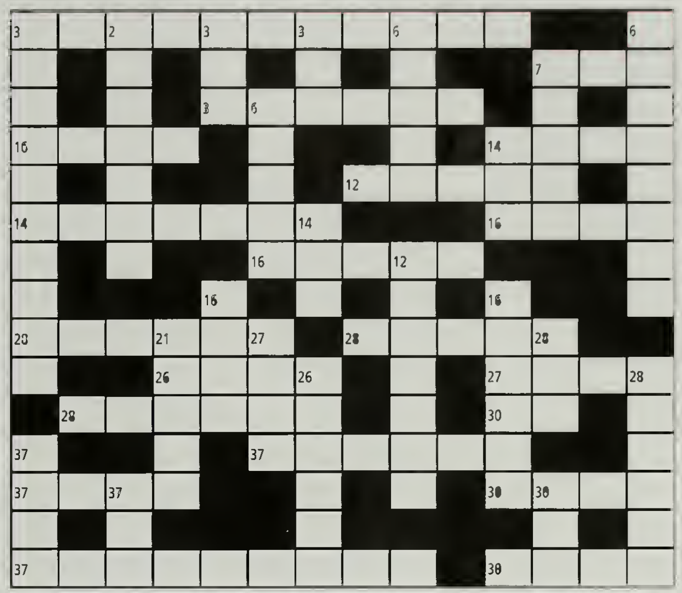
All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. "Blessed are the ______ , for they will be called sons of God."
7. "For if you forgive men when they ___ against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Ch. 6.
8. The Pharisees asked: "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the ____ ?" 15:2.
10. "You are the ___ of the earth … "
11. Jesus said: "Again, anyone who says to his brother, '___' (meaning ignorant) is answerable to the Sanhedrin." Ch. 5.
12. "Turn the other ___ ."
13. Peter and Andrew "were ____ a net into the lake when Jesus saw them." Ch. 4.
15. "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, … the ___ hear, the dead are raised … " Ch 11.
16. These are separated from the sheep (plural).
20. This prophet appeared with Jesus at the Transfiguration.
23. "… keep the ___ you have made to the Lord. But I tell you, Do not swear at all … "
25. "so be it"; ending of a prayer.
27. "… and on this ___ I will build my church … " Ch. 16.
29. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and ___ in heart … " 11:29.
30. "But store up for yourselves treasures __ heaven … " Ch. 6.
32. Jesus healed many of these people afflicted with a skin disease (plural).
33. "… on earth as __ __ in heaven." (two words).
35. "I ___ you the truth … " An expression Jesus uses throughout Matthew.
37. Jesus cautions that the salt should not lose its ____ .
38. "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through ___ places seeking rest … " 12:43.

DOWN

1. "Blessed are those who are _____ because of righteousness … "
2. "Do not think that I have come to ____ the Law or the Prophets … " 5:17.
3. "If your right ___ causes you to sin, gouge it out … "
4. "Who of you by worrying can ___ a single hour to his life?" Ch. 6.
5. The meek will inherit this.
6. The Pharisees said: "Look! Your disciples are doing what is ____ on the Sabbath." 12:2.
7. "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, ___ the dust off your feet when you leave … " Ch. 10.
9. "Some men brought to him a paralytic, ___ on a mat." Ch. 9.
11. "When evening comes, you say 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is ___ .'" Ch. 16.
14. "You cannot serve both ___ and Money."
17. The Pharisees called Jesus by this title when testing him with questions. Ch. 22.
18. Jesus was called the ___ of God; an animal sacrificed at Passover.
19. Peter said: "You are the ___ , the Son of the living God."
21. A disciple and son of Zebedee.
22. "Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in ___ ." 10:28.
24. The ___ of Man.
26. Jesus compares a rich man's entry into heaven to a camel going through the eye of this.
28. Jesus explained that "he must be ___ and on the third day be raised to life." 16:21.
31. "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or ___ from thistles?" Ch. 7.
34. "News about (Jesus) spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ___ with various diseases." 4:24.
36. "What is whispered in your ___, proclaim from the roofs." 10:27.



RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our November 2010 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526. Deadline: October 1, 2010.

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(Continued from page 5)

delighted that the board was courageous enough to look beyond church membership for the candidate with the best qualifications to meet the specific challenges facing the school.—*Rich Preheim, Elkhart, Ind.*

Radio preaching

Regarding the Grace and Truth column in the July issue: Ron Adams writes about being addicted to radio preaching. I do not have the privilege of listening to all of the names mentioned, but I have heard portions of messages from some of them. I hear enthusiasm. I hear Scripture. It makes me go back to the Bible to check some of it out.

Our response should be the same as that of the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the believers at Philippi (Philippians 1:18): "But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice." Let us rejoice.—*Harold Kraybill, Lebanon. Pa.*

Peace church as worship of God

Let me give a hearty affirmation to the article by J. Denny Weaver ("The Peace Church as Worship of God," July). Why cannot we say that King Saul, Joshua and others of the Old Testament were mistaken when they thought that God ordered them to kill; to use a scorched-earth policy in which men, women, children and animals were slain; that they, in their limited understanding of God and without even being aware of it, were projecting their own image, their own vengeful, violent feelings and desires upon God, and that God commanded no such thing?

I cannot abide the God-sanctioned violence portrayed in these Scriptures and cannot read such stories to my grandchildren.—*John Asa Hertzler, Edinburg, Va.*

I just finished reading J. Denny Weaver's article on renewing the peace stance in Mennonite Church USA ("The Peace Church as Worship of God," July). I found myself agreeing on every point he made and was ready to rise up with an "Amen." But then I read his analogy of the football game and thought, "Aw, he still does not get it." Football is a violent, aggressive sport pitting one team against another, where injuring the other player is a way of getting ahead in the game. The competitive nature of the game argues against everything Weaver said so well. But it proves the point most ably. We, meaning Christian society, have so far to go in becoming the shalom-filled people that God intends.—*Carole Boshart. Eugene, Ore.*

Regarding "The Peace Church as Worship of God" (July): J. Denny Weaver so aptly places the emphasis on the Mennonite church as a peace church. It is as important as ever that the peace church be proclaiming itself in love as our witness to the world as disciples of Jesus. His teaching is clearly of nonviolence and is to separate us from the world and the way to worship God in spirit and in truth. Yes, it's true that historical, traditional views of God are varied as God is understood as a violent God. God is omnipotent. This is interpreted by humans in various beliefs, but I see this in my limited eyes of faith and have faith and trust in God to look for good in the midst of evil or in destructive paths.—*Annie (Cathy) Boshart, Lebanon, Pa.*

In "The Peace Church as Worship of God" (July), Weaver raises these troubling questions: How long will Mennonites remain a peace church, and how long will Mennonites care? I raise these: Are Mennonites satisfied to be labeled a historic peace church or even a "current" peace church, or do they feel called to actively build peace, make peace, do peace? To be more specific, will Mennonites make statements or take direct action in reference to Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza, Iran, North Korea? Will serious two-year commitments to Christian Peacemaker Teams be expected of our young people and our healthy retirees, just as are one-year commitments to Mennonite Voluntary Service? Will CPT be considered as mainstream to Mennonites as Mennonite Central Committee? Will our congregations financially support these CPT volunteers as we commonly subsidize their attendance at Mennonite colleges?—*Phillips Rhoads, Overland Park, Kan.*

Where is accountability?

The questions that appear in our church papers indicate that the constituency of Mennonite Mutual Aid and other Anabaptist clients are not aware of changes at MMA. We have a right to know rather than reading about the changes after the fact.

Where is the original mutual aid? Do we really need a bank or credit union? Acting as insurance broker is not mutual aid. There is a lack of transparency that suggests MMA is being secretive. Mennonite Church USA and Anabaptists are the real owners of the operation—not the management and not the board of directors. The lack of input is a churchwide problem.—*Ralph D. Martin, Goshen, Ind.*

Larry Miller responds

We agree: MMA is owned by our members and the faith community. Our board represents our church community. The board meets with a wide range of constituents so it can make decisions that represent them well. We are an agency of Mennonite Church USA, and one of the most important reasons for this relationship is accountability. MMA's direction remains under the mission and vision of Mennonite Church USA. With this board representation and agency accountability, we believe modern financial services and tools can be shaped and delivered to help stewardship and mutual aid continue to flourish among church members in our current times.—*Larry D. Miller, president and CEO, MMA*

First things first Let's first give ourselves to God

And they went beyond our expectations; having given themselves first of all to the Lord, they gave themselves by the will of God also to us.—2 Corinthians 8:5 TNIV

I've been pondering what difference it makes in our giving to others when we give ourselves "first of all to the Lord." For the Macedonians, t apparently made a significant difference. The Apostle Paul was amazed by the giving of the poverty-stricken Christians in Macedonia. He declared that they gave "beyond their ability." He was awed that "their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity." Not only that, "they urgently pleaded with [Paul] for the privilege of sharing in this service [of relief] to the Lord's people." Paul hoped their example would inspire the Corinthians. (See 2 Corinthians 8:2-8.)

Paul's words in his second letter to the Corinthians (chapters 8 and 9) were prompted by a special relief project on behalf of the churches in Jerusalem. Paul longed to deliver a generous gift to the saints who were suffering want. He explained to the Corinthians that the financial generosity of the Macedonians, their neighbors to the north, was an expression of God's grace. Their generosity was rooted in God's gracious love.

Paul believed that exposure to the generous heart of God changes people. It has the power to transform one's thoughts and actions to align with God's will. A heartfelt act of surrender to God yields the fruit of love, devotion and generosity.

Upon his recent retirement from development work at Associated Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., Leroy Saner spoke in a similar vein. He said: "I have learned a lot about giving and generosity. Giving is an extension of God's grace. Giving helps us extend God's gift of grace to others. I have learned that individuals who are generous benefit enormously from being generous." He added, "Being generous connects people to their deepest values."

Getting close to the heart of God moves us toward compassion for others. Therefore, instead of grumpily tossing a few mites into the koinonia kettle when a need arises, we find ourselves dipping generously into our purses and pockets for the privilege of sharing in the service of giving to the Lord's people.

We see this same generosity in Jesus' parable of the sower, who scattered seed even in places where there was little hope of fruit (Matthew 13:3-9). Paul is thinking along similar lines when he tells the Corinthians that "whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." He goes on to say that God even supplies the seed. He wrote with confidence that "God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." All this is possible, Paul asserts, "because of the surpassing grace God has given you" (2 Corinthians 9:6-15).

When God's grace works through us to meet the troubles in the world, it brings healing and hope. I received a letter from Margery Tonks of St. Croix, who wrote to thank Mennonites for assistance following the devastation of Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of an interfaith coalition that rose in the wake of the disaster, she wrote: "You shared financial resources with us at a time when we were very needy. … Most of all when we needed our hope bolstered you were there to help. Thank you again and again."

When God's grace works through us to meet the troubles in the world, it brings healing and hope.

So what is the evidence that we first gave ourselves to the Lord? If we take our clues from Paul, one indication is the fruit of generosity, imparted by a gracious and loving God, offering healing and hope to a world in need. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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Do we need a new hymnal?

Everett J. Thomas

We have posted this question on our website as a poll question. We ask the question (vote at www.themennonite.org) because Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) will need to make a decision in the next year. A better question might have been, Would your congregation pay $21.95 for each new hymnal?

"We are still in the discernment stage," says Ron Rempel, executive director for MPN, when asked about the status of this project.

The stakes are high, and they are more than financial. Our hymnal is our prayer book. It is the way we, together, speak most passionately to God. The hymns we hold in common forge a bond anywhere we gather.

A startling demonstration of this bond happened at a Mennonite youth convention in 1997. Convention leaders rented Sea World in Orlando, Fla., for a private Shamu showing. As some 6,000 youth and sponsors waited for the show to begin, someone started, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" (606 in the *Mennonite Hymnal*). The Sea World staff stared in disbelief, surrounded by thousands of mostly teenagers singing in four parts, a cappella and without song books. This was not showing off. It was the way we said who we were.

What happens to our … singing tradition if we don't do this right?—Amy Gingerich

But Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA leaders—through MPN—have some difficult questions to answer now if they expect to have a new hymnal available by 2016. In email exchanges with five of these leaders, these questions emerged as critical to the discernment process:

1. Is it possible to anticipate the worship and music needs of congregations six or seven years from now?
2. Can a new hymnal serve the growing diversity of music styles in our churches? For example how would a new hymnal serve the increased use of praise and worship songs?
3. Will a new hymnal be viable if it is published only in print form?
4. Will a new hymnal serve the worship needs of underrepresented racial/ethnic churches?
5. Will congregations have enough money to buy new hymnals in quantity for their members?
6. Could production be conditional on congregations preordering copies in order to get the funds needed to make it?

The advent of electronic media increases both the challenges and opportunities for a project such as this.

"This project will … be very unlike any previous hymn collection that has appeared between the hard covers of a book that sits in a pew," said Dave Bergen, Mennonite Church Canada's executive secretary for Christian formation.

Bergen said the end result may include such a book, but it will need to be much more flexible technically: The new version will need to respond to congregations' practice of projecting music onto a screen and the desire to transpose and arrange music using computer-based technology. Bergen also said it will need to incorporate visual media to support worship.

The decision will have ramifications for generations to come since singing is central to our worship life as Mennonites.

"We need to be asking what we can afford and also what happens to our denomination and our singing tradition if we don't do this right," says Amy Gingerich, MPN's editorial director. "It's a balancing act."

In the meantime, each congregation can ask: Do we need a new hymnal? If we do, who will pay for it? Those charged with making this important decision are interested in what you think.—*ejt*

Sales

Hymnal: A Worship Book	99,792
Sing the Journey	36,271
Sing the Story	18,787

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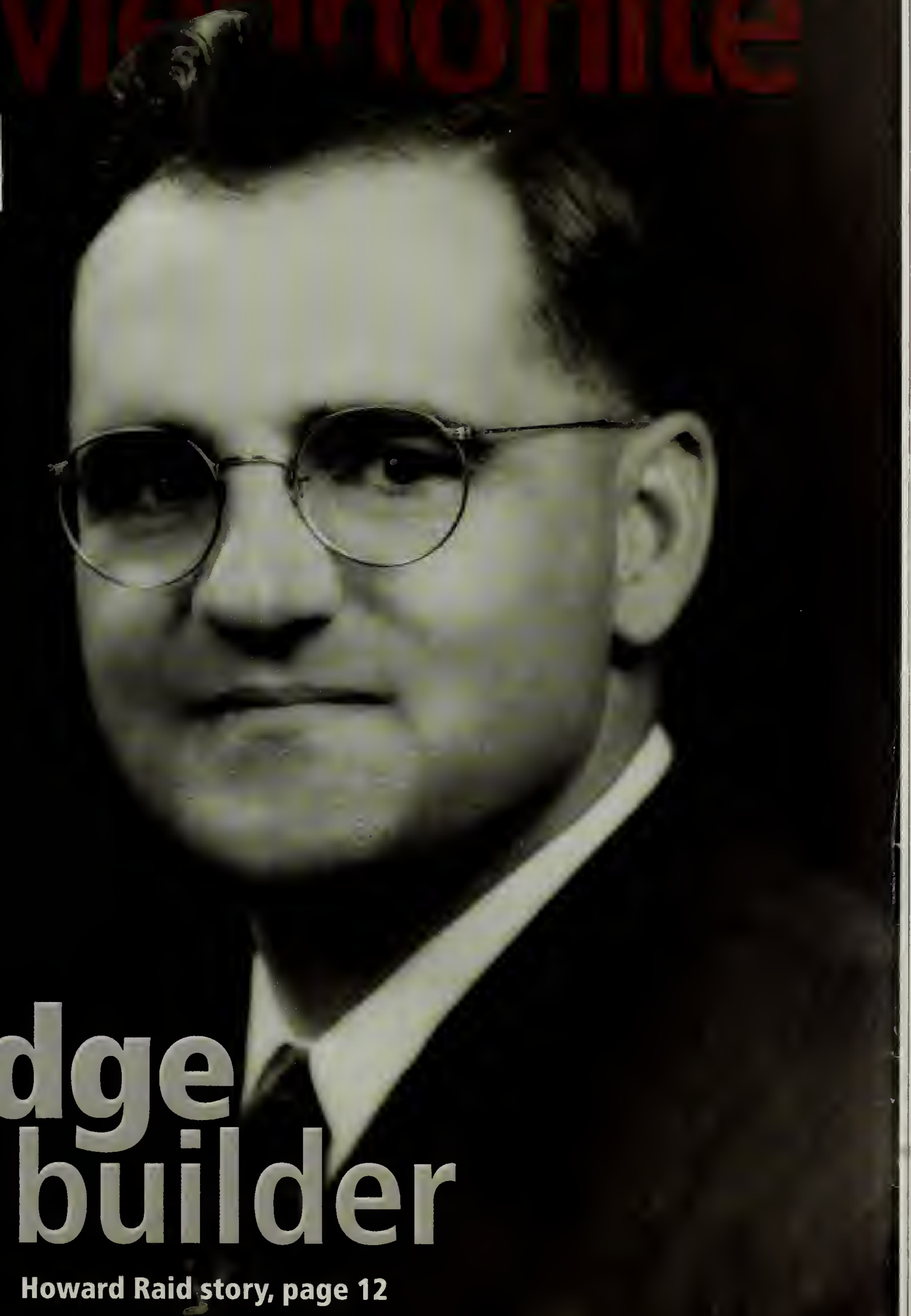

a bridge builder

Howard Raid story, page 12

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- When you chair the committee
- The journey is the destination
- Who speaks for me?
- Witnessing for peace in an empire
- Editorial: Talking with each other

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The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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LETTERS

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Boycott Arizona?

Here are some points to ponder as Mennonite Church USA considers a boycott of Arizona after deciding to hold the 2013 assembly in Phoenix:

Canceling the existing contract would likely result in large penalties.

Those who would be most seriously affected by cancellation would be the food service and housekeeping staff who are for the most part legal with probably some well-behaved undocumented people who would be out of work because of the boycott. Their employers, the large hotel corporations, have deep pockets. Although they would suffer some financial loss, they would survive.

Finally, I would point out that the Mennonite World Conference met in Zimbabwe, which was much, much worse than Arizona then and is now even worse. But our people saw the conditions close up and were in support of our Mennonite brothers and sisters who have to live in that tragedy every day.

I recommend holding off until after the upcoming election. The atmosphere is now so charged that even moderate candidates are pandering to their respective bases. November should give us a better picture of where the possible pressure points are, who will be part of the help and who will be of no use.*—H.D. Swartzendruber, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Correction on MWC news

Regarding "2015 MWC Assembly May be Held in Pennsylvania" (September): Technically that can be true since we do not yet know what God is planning for the next global assembly. But the headline and first paragraph of the news brief are unfaithful to the Mennonite World Conference news release and to the MWC executive committee decision. Unlike the headline, the MWC release says "USA," not "Pennsylvania."

For MWC, it is essential that inviting churches have opportunity to state where in their country they would like an assembly to be held. That has not yet been the case for a 2015 invitation. Initial face-to-face conversations with the American member churches (U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ General Conference, Mennonite Church USA) and associate member church (Conservative Mennonite Conference) were scheduled to take place in the Sept. 22-30 period. We hope to know a little more after those conversations about possible American interest in issuing an invitation and, if already possible, about their preferred location, whether Pennsylvania or elsewhere.*—Larry Miller, general secretary, Mennonite World Conference*

Allaying fears

Regarding "Newton Office Won't Close" (September): Thank you for this important statement about the status of Mennonite offices. No matter how many times I say it, people still seem to think that our offices in Newton, Kan., are soon closing. I hope your very clear statement to the contrary will help allay some of those fears.
—Kevin Goertzen, church relations associate, Mennonite Mission Network

Clarification

The April 23 credentialing of a new oversight ministry team in New York City took place at Primera Iglesia Menonita de Brooklyn. Composed of

(Continued on page 62)

Should Mennonite Publishing Network plan now for a new hymnal by 2016?

Editor's note: *We asked this question in the September editorial, as a poll question on our website and on the Facebook page for* The Mennonite. *Here are some Facebook responses:*

I consider the recent Mennonite hymnal to be very relevant and a new one is really not necessary.—*David Araujo*

It is a fairly large chunk of change for a church that could be used in other worthy projects. More churches are using projection for congregational singing.—*Ed Taylor*

Why a new hymnal? Just to add some pop songs? Or are the old ones out of print? Most churches already have contemporary songbooks or they project contemporary songs on a screen.—*Judith Vargo*

My experience over the years has been that of finding so many entries in the current hymnal to be unfamiliar. Yes, we should learn new songs, but if there is a new hymnal, it would be helpful to revise it with a return to more of the old tried-and-true hymns of the faith. I would be more inclined to order the spiral shorter hymn books that are used (e.g. *Sing the Story*).—*Tim Schultz*

I think congregations have more important things to do with their money—spread the good news of Jesus and respond to the many needs in our communities and the world. Updates should be similar to *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*. We still have plenty of new discoveries in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.—*Suzann Bauman*

Sounds like a lot of effort and money just to "update" something people already love—not to mention the environmental impact making everyone change hymnals.—*Becca Stucky*

No, especially not if the plan is to add more "contemporary" hymns. I cannot stand them. With lyrics suitable for preschool songs and a reading level comprehended by even my golden retriever, they in no way enhance a worship service. On the other hand, if the plan is to include more real hymns that enhance a worship experience and a relationship with God ...—*Gayle Ann Livecchia*

The hymnal and supplements that we currently have are sufficient for us. We still do not know all these hymns, and there are Sunday school classes [in our church] that still pull out the red hymnal when they sing as a class. Resources would be better used to project the lyrics with the music and in offering new praise songs with stronger Anabaptist connections.
—*Dave Maurer*

I don't feel that a new hymnal is necessary, especially when many of the hymns from the red hymnal were "politically corrected" to be included in the blue hymnal. I know many churches where both are still used and in fact the red hymnal is the favored one. The money needed for this project would be better used in other areas of the church mission.
—*Yvonne Taylor*

Website poll results (180 votes)
No: 57%
Yes: 22%
Not sure: 21%

IN THIS ISSUE

The former General Conference Mennonite Church would have been 150 years old in 2010. We mark this anniversary year with a cover story featuring a long-time GC leader: Howard Raid.

"Raid played key roles in developing Mennonite organizations," writes his daughter Elizabeth Raid (page 12). "His was often the lone GC Mennonite voice among strong (Old) Mennonite (MC) leaders, including Orie Miller, Harold L. Swartzendruber, Samuel S. Wenger and Guy F. Hershberger."

Associate editor Gordon Houser served as editor of the GC periodical, also called *The Mennonite*. In his editorial (page 64), Houser describes deep convictions about unity that sparked the formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Coincidentally, a building in Newton, Kan., that housed the offices of the former General Conference Mennonite Church, is also in the news. The lead story in our news section explains why Mennonite Church USA will sell two-thirds of the building and a new relationship being formed with an Evangelical Free Church congregation (page 37).

Also in the news section are two stories focusing on Native Mennonites. The first (page 38) reports on a gathering of Native Americans in Ashland, Mont., July 19-22. Speakers called on Mennonite Church USA to begin listening to the voices of indigenous people. They also examined assumptions made about American history, including the Battle of Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876, with George Custer and his U.S. cavalry.—*Editor*

Grace to you

Sara Dick is associate pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Most of us can easily conjure up a memory of disgrace: an embarrassing moment, a stressful event, a painful conversation. We might have felt that disgrace in the pit of our stomach or the clench of our jaw or the ache in our head.

Sometimes we bear lasting marks from our disgrace: scars on our knees, broken relationships, lost jobs, high blood pressure, ulcers and so on. We may even start to think that we're created to be in a more-or-less constant state of disgrace, as often as we feel it.

But throughout God's story, many witnesses testify to something else. The Psalms proclaim a grace-filled creation:

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
(Psalm 148:7, 10)

And in the person of Jesus, we see that grace is not only an abstract, intangible idea. The Gospel of John tells us, "the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. … From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:14, 16).

God's grace became known to us in a human body. Grace wasn't just something "up there" or "out there" but something that was made flesh and dwelt among us—something tangible, physical.

God's grace is also the body's grace.

A friend of mine shared with me this wonderful phrase from InterPlay, a creative movement approach designed to open up the body's wisdom: "the physicality of grace." InterPlay's founders describe the physicality of grace as "a set of physical experiences describing the satisfying and enlivening state of being calm, centered, energized, alert, relaxed, etc."

Ah, I feel better just reading that. Grace isn't just something abstract and heavenly but something I can feel right now. God's grace is also the body's grace.

Ingrid Friesen Moser speaks of the body's grace in her book *Body Talk: Speaking the Words of Health*. She defines health as living fully in our bodies as fully loved beings. She describes Jesus as one who lived fully in his own body, eating, drinking, resting, walking.

Jesus embodied grace and saw it in the others whom he met as he taught, traveled and worshiped with his friends. In the words of Proverbs 15:30, he knew that "good news refreshes the body."

One woman heard about Jesus' good news and hoped he might be able to heal her. She had already spent all her money on treatments that had not worked. When she got close enough to Jesus, she touched the fringes of his coat.

"Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease" (Mark 5:29).

She experienced God's healing physically; she felt grace in her body. And Jesus, because he, too, knew the body's grace, could feel God's healing power flow to this woman. Jesus sees grace in us, too, when we come to him in prayer, in pain or in praise, and he calls this grace into greater fullness by his love and forgiveness.

Here and now, God offers diverse ways for God's diverse people to enter the body's grace—to live in our bodies as people fully loved by God. We may experience the physicality of grace through music, dance, stillness, sports, hiking, giving thanks, making love or food or art, gardening, singing, offering comfort or a million other things. We experience it in our gathered bodies, too—in our churches, small groups, neighborhoods and networks.

The Apostle Paul often sent a greeting of grace to the gathered body. "Grace to you," he wrote to his friends afar. How might we share the body's grace with one another this week or this month? How might we feel in ourselves and call forth in others the grace that God has given us so freely?

Jesus Christ,
we are your body;
you live in us
and we live in you.
Grant us grace,
grace upon grace:
each body's grace
and our gathered body's grace.
We have seen your glory;
we have heard your good news;
we have felt your grace.
We give you thanks.
Through the wisdom of your Spirit,
we pray. Amen. TM

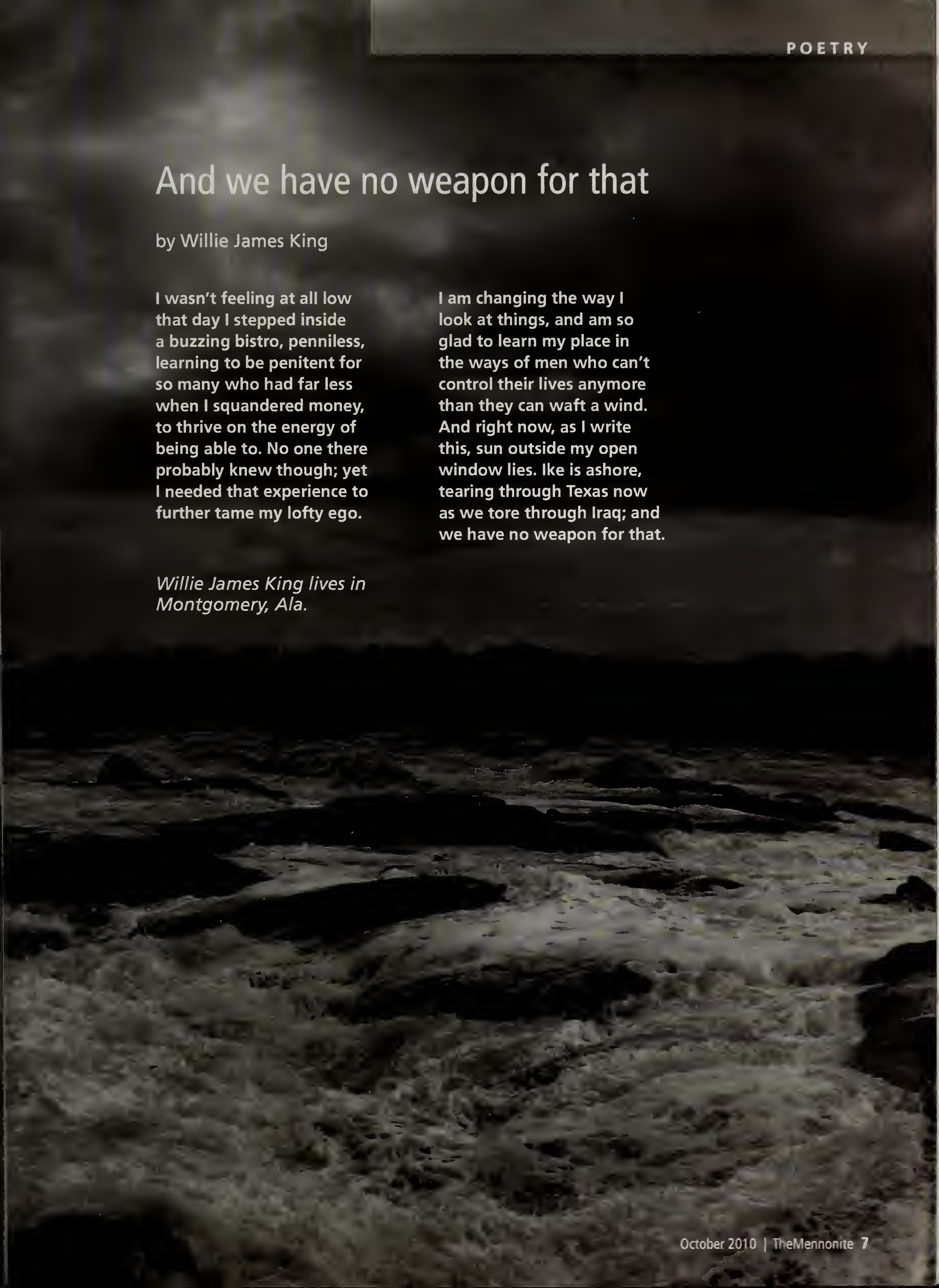
And we have no weapon for that

by Willie James King

I wasn't feeling at all low
that day I stepped inside
a buzzing bistro, penniless,
learning to be penitent for
so many who had far less
when I squandered money,
to thrive on the energy of
being able to. No one there
probably knew though; yet
I needed that experience to
further tame my lofty ego.

I am changing the way I
look at things, and am so
glad to learn my place in
the ways of men who can't
control their lives anymore
than they can waft a wind.
And right now, as I write
this, sun outside my open
window lies. Ike is ashore,
tearing through Texas now
as we tore through Iraq; and
we have no weapon for that.

Willie James King lives in Montgomery, Ala.



MCC won't coordinate global relief efforts

GOSHEN, Ind.—At the same time Mennonite Central Committee is working through its New Wine/New Wineskins reorganization process, some churches that are part of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) wanted to talk about their own relief and service efforts. Although MCC is a North American entity, the majority of its programs are focused outside North America.

At the Global Anabaptist Service Consultation Aug. 6-9 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, discussion centered around whether MCC should redesign its current organization to become a global, coordinating body.

"While some favored asking MCC to assume responsibility for global coordination of service activities," said an Aug. 30 MWC release, "the majority wanted MCC to remain a North American organization coming to a new global entity as an equal partner, even with its larger size and operations."

In an e-mail on Sept. 8, MCC's executive director Arli Klassen expressed appreciation for resolution to this question.

"The direction selected at the Global Anabaptist Service Consultation clarifies that MCC will not 'globalize' by inviting other countries to join MCC and MCC U.S. as national members in a global MCC system," Klassen said. "Instead MCC will 'globalize' by joining with all the other Anabaptist service entities as an equal member. … We have been seeking direction on this question and are pleased with the clear direction given."—*Everett J. Thomas*

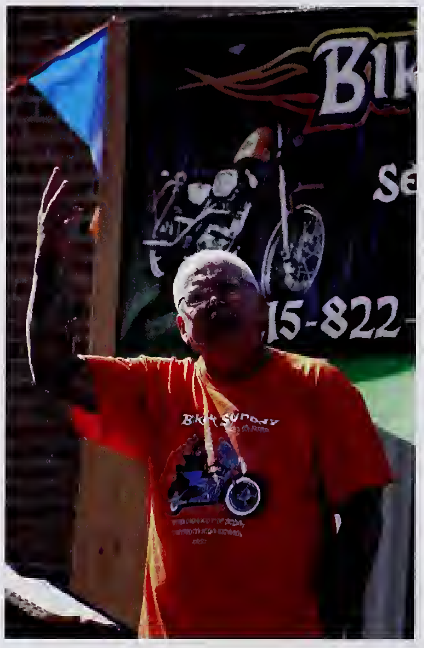
New *Missio Dei* on immigration

ELKHART, Ind.—At last year's "And You Welcomed Me" conference on a biblical view of immigration, Sandra Martinez-Montes, member of Iglesia Menonita Mi Redentor in Richardson, Texas, had hopes for life after the conference, and others agreed. After hearing Daniel Carroll present, Mennonite Mission Network staff thought the series of Missio Dei booklets seemed like a natural fit. Now *Missio Dei #19, Immigration and the Bible*, can be downloaded as a PDF from www.MennoniteMission.net/Tools in English or Spanish. Carroll is a distinguished professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, Littleton, Colo.

"Carroll reminded us at the recent consultation that real followers of Jesus should be turning to the Bible to see what it has to say on this important matter," says James Krabill, MMN senior executive for global ministries.

Carroll said: "I believe the Bible responds to human reality right now. It can orient the national, it orients the immigrant, and it can orient us all as we engage each other and the government."—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Lindesy Groshl



Biker Sunday draws 700 to Line Lexington

Lowell Delp, pastor of the Line Lexington (Pa.) Mennonite Church, preaches at the Sept. 19 event. His text was John 8:36, and the sermon was entitled, "Free Indeed." The event also featured the Breaking the Bondage Blues Band. The gathering attracted 700 bikers and other participants.—*Everett Thomas*

MWC endorses dialogue with Catholics, Lutherans

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia—During its annual meeting in July, the executive committee of Mennonite World Conference approved participation in a tri-lateral conversation with the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. General secretary Larry Miller said, "Because of our history, we Anabaptists have often seen ourselves as heirs of martyrs, and we need to come to terms with how that affects our view of the world. We also need to see ourselves as members of the wider body of Christ, called to give an account of our convictions and practices, and to receive others as they do likewise." The dialogue will begin in 2011.—*Bridgefolk.net*

Stanley C. Shenk dies at 91

GOSHEN, Ind.—Goshen College professor emeritus of Bible Stanley C. Shenk died Sept. 2 at Greencroft Healthcare Center in Goshen. Shenk, 91, taught Bible at the college from 1965 to 1985. Shenk was known for his love of inductive Bible study, and he taught many students to use that method to unlock the Scriptures for themselves. He led about a dozen tours to the Holy Land, including several Goshen College Middle East Bible Seminars. Shenk was born to Coffman and Icie Pearl Shenk on March 30, 1919, in Denbigh, Va. He married Doris Sell on June 20, 1942, at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Shenk received a bachelor of theology degree from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., in 1943, a bachelor's degree in English and a bachelor of theology degree from Goshen College in 1944 and a doctorate from New York University in 1971. He also attended Eastern Baptist Theological Seminar, Princeton Theological Seminary and graduated from Biblical Seminary in New York in 1959.—*Goshen College*

—compiled by Anna Groff

Directory not printed

GOSHEN, Ind.—The *Mennonite Church USA Directory* last came out in print for 2009. It will no longer be printed but will remain an online publication.

"Several factors contributed to this decision, which is supported by Mennonite Publishing Network," wrote Mennonite Church USA staff member Marty Lehman in a letter to leaders on Sept. 9. "The online Directory is always up-to-date, while the printed version is out of date before it is distributed. Sales of the printed version have been steadily falling for many years. Because of budget constraints, we have reduced staff, and we've had to make decisions about what we can and can't do. ... More and more people are using the online Directory."

Print versions were published every other year beginning in 2003.*—Everett J. Thomas*

Bluffton unveils 'J. Denny Beaver' as new mascot

Bluffton (Ohio) University's new mascot, "J. Denny Beaver," poses on campus. Senior Cody Litwiller, a marketing major from Hopedale, Ill., receives much of the credit for the work on the mascot, who is named in honor of J. Denny Weaver, professor emeritus of religion.*—Bluffton University*

Bethel conference fills in Anabaptist history

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—When it comes to religious history, the standard college textbook for "Western Civilization" has a blank; a conference at Bethel College, North Newton, was planned to begin to fill it in.

After more than 50 years of scholarly study of the Anabaptists, such a text nowadays will cover the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement in 16th-century Europe, says Mark Jantzen, Bethel associate professor of history. "But after 1550, [the Anabaptists] disappear."

Jantzen and his colleague Mary Sprunger, professor of history at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., were co-planners for "Marginal or Mainstream? Anabaptists, Mennonites and Modernity in European Society," held June 25-26.

It isn't that all topics related to 16th-century Anabaptism have been exhausted, says Sprunger. But "a new generation" of scholars has begun to look more closely at other time periods. The thesis of the conference, in fact, was that Mennonites, far from retreating into obscurity as the textbooks suggest, were an important influence on European economics, politics, religion and other areas of society over the next centuries, the "modern era."*—Bethel College*

MCC's IVEP celebrates 60th anniversary

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Melani Susanti recalls feeling a certain emptiness in her life as a young professional at a high-tech printing company in Indonesia. She prayed about it for several years, and in 2006, after meeting Dan and Jeanne Jantzi, who were Mennonite Central Committee representatives in Indonesia, she applied to serve one year with MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program.

Susanti is one of 3,446 men and women who have participated in IVEP since MCC founded the program, which marks its 60th anniversary this year.

Participants spend one year in Canada or the United States, often living with a host family, attending a local congregation and doing an internship.*—MCC*

Pleasantview Home appoints new director

KALONA, Iowa—David S. Heusinkveld is Pleasantview Home of Kalona's new executive director. He will begin his new role in mid-October.

Since 2004 Heusinkveld has served as executive director of MDC Goldenrod of Goshen, Ind., an agency providing residential, respite care and day services to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Prior to that assignment he was a pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind., for 11 years. In his early work career he served as Operations Director in Iowa City for Goodwill Industries of Southeast Iowa.

Heusinkveld has a bachelor's degree in religion from Hope College of Holland, Mich., and he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.*—Pleasantview Home*

Studies detail wastefulness in the health-care system

In a Sept. 7 article in the *New York Times*, Kevin Sack reports that "researchers have calculated that more than half of the 354 million doctor visits made each year for acute medical care, like for fevers, stomachaches and coughs, are not with a patient's primary physician, and that more than a quarter take place in hospital emergency rooms."

The research comes from a study published in the journal *Health Affairs*. Its authors said it highlights a significant question about the new federal health-care law: Can access to primary care be maintained, much less improved, when an already inadequate and inefficient system takes on an expected 32 million newly insured customers?

The study examined records of acute care visits from 2001 to 2004 and concluded that "28 percent took place in emergency rooms, including almost all of the visits made on weekends and after office hours."

Further, "more than half of acute care visits made by patients without health insurance were to emergency rooms, which are required by federal law to screen any patient who arrives there and treat those deemed in serious jeopardy," Sack writes. "Not only does that pose a heavy workload and financial burden on hospitals, but it means that basic care is being provided in a needlessly expensive setting, often after long waits and with little access to follow-up treatment."

Often the emergency room is the only option for people, and they cannot get the care they need, when they need it, from their family doctor.

"The new federal law is expected to bolster primary care by increasing reimbursement for practitioners, luring students into the field with incentives, expanding community health centers and encouraging new models known as accountable care organizations and patient-centered medical homes," Sack writes.

However, the authors of the study warn, that might not be enough, since things don't always go as planned. "If primary care lags behind rising demand, patients will seek care elsewhere," they write.

A separate study in the same issue of *Health Affairs* addresses another source of waste in the health-care system—medical liability and defensive medicine.

The paper by three Harvard professors and a colleague at the University of Melbourne in Australia estimates that the medical-liability system added $55.6 billion to the cost of American medicine in 2008, equal to 2.4 percent of total health spending.

"More than 80 percent of those dollars—$45.6 billion—was attributed to defensive medicine by physicians who order unnecessary tests and procedures to protect themselves from malpractice claims," Sack writes.

The authors estimated the cost of various components of the medical liability system, including payments to malpractice plaintiffs, defensive medicine, administrative costs like legal fees and lost time by clinicians.

The new health law did not make substantial changes to the medical liability system, despite Republican calls for restrictions on malpractice claims.

"Reforms that offer the prospect of reducing these costs have modest potential to exert downward pressure on overall health spending," the study concluded. "Reforms to the health-care delivery system, such as alterations to the fee-for-service reimbursement system and the incentives it provides for overuse, probably provide greater opportunities for savings."

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann

I'M A FIRM BELIEVER IN REGULAR DEVOTIONS.
HOLY
IN FACT, I STUDY MY BIBLE ALMOST EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK.
HOLY
ALMOST ON MONDAY, ALMOST ON TUESDAY, ALMOST ON ....

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “Singing the national anthem is not politically innocent. To 'speak Christian' does not insure we will be faithful witnesses to Christ, but it may not be a bad place to begin rediscovering the radical implications of Christian orthodoxy.”—*Stanley Hauerwas in* Mennonite Quarterly Review

The brain needs rest, preferably in nature

At the University of California, San Francisco, scientists have found that when rats have a new experience, their brains show new patterns of activity. But only when the rats take a break from their exploration do they process those patterns in a way that seems to create a persistent memory of the experience.

The researchers suspect that the findings also apply to how humans learn.

"Almost certainly, downtime lets the brain go over experiences it's had, solidify them and turn them into permanent long-term memories," said Loren Frank, assistant professor in the department of physiology at the university, where he specializes in learning and memory. He said he believed that when the brain was constantly stimulated, "you prevent this learning process."

At the University of Michigan, a study found that people learned significantly better after a walk in nature than after a walk in a dense urban environment, suggesting that processing a barrage of information leaves people fatigued.

Even though people feel entertained, even relaxed, when they multitask while exercising or pass a moment at the bus stop by catching a video clip, they might be taxing their brains, scientists say.

"People think they're refreshing themselves, but they're fatiguing themselves," says Marc Berman, a University of Michigan neuroscientist.—*New York Times*

Worship together

- Percent of African Americans who attend church regularly as a couple: 40
- Percent of Mexican-Americans who attend church regularly as a couple: 31
- Percent of whites who attend church regularly as a couple: 29

—*Religion News Service*

Aid to the wealthy

Alan S. Blinder, former vice chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, argues in the *Wall Street Journal* that tax cuts given to upper-income folks during the Bush administration should expire for the same reason that they shouldn't have been enacted: the country can't afford them. Rather than using the increased tax revenue to lower the national debt, he says, the money should be redirected toward unemployment benefits. Redirecting the tax cuts to unemployment benefits would create about 500,000 more jobs each year.—*The Christian Century*

Farmers markets

- Number of farmers markets in the United States in 1994: 1,755
- Number of farmers markets in the United States in 2010: 5,274—*Yes! Magazine*

Jordan River 'too polluted' for baptism

Concerns about pollution and water quality have prompted an environmental advocacy group to call for the banning of baptisms in the lower Jordan River, where the Bible says Jesus was baptized. "For reasons of public health as well as religious integrity, baptism should be banned from taking place in the river," says Gidon Bromberg, the Israeli director of EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East.—*Religion News Service*

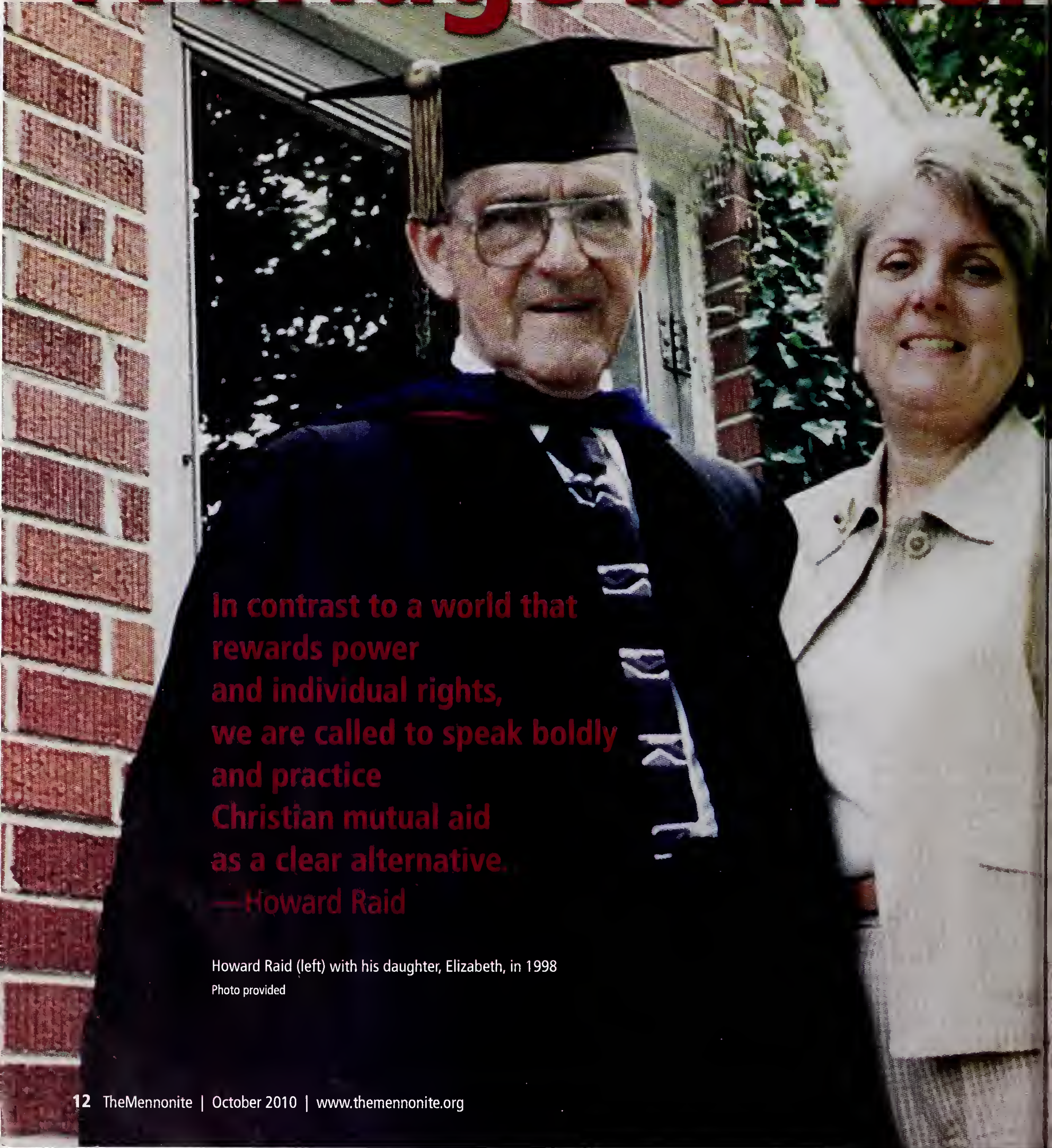
20 best countries in the world

1. Finland
2. Switzerland
3. Sweden
4. Australia
5. Luxembourg
6. Norway
7. Canada
8. Netherlands
9. Japan
10. Denmark
11. United States
12. Germany
13. New Zealand
14. United Kingdom
15. South Korea
16. France
17. Ireland
18. Austria
19. Belgium
20. Singapore

—*Newsweek*

Howard Raid was a leader in the General Conference Mennonite Church who stressed reaching out a helping hand.

A bridge builder



In contrast to a world that rewards power and individual rights, we are called to speak boldly and practice Christian mutual aid as a clear alternative.
—Howard Raid

Howard Raid (left) with his daughter, Elizabeth, in 1998
Photo provided

by Elizabeth Raid

We live in times filled with uncertainty, fear and power struggles on many levels, but are these times unique? In the preface to his 1967 book on Mennonite mutual aid, Howard Raid writes: "We are inclined to think that our age is the only or at least the first to experience change. Every age was an uncertain one until it was past."

To look at the past is to discover the future. In reflection, the way for today unfolds. The life of Howard Raid, ordained Mennonite minister, college professor and president, builder of numerous Mennonite organizations, businessman, church and community leader and Mennonite historian, provides a reference point for us in these uncertain times. Raid's many personal relationships, whether with struggling students, the town outcast, top businesspeople, government officials or significant church leaders, grew out of his Christian commitment to the biblical principles of community, mutual aid and stewardship. These guiding principles, along with his practical, hands-on, dig-in-the-dirt style, coursed through his veins, forming the lifeblood of his choices at critical times in his life.

In the July 14, 1992, issue of *The Mennonite*, Raid wrote: "In contrast to a world that rewards power and individual rights, we are called to speak boldly and practice Christian mutual aid as a clear alternative. Mutual aid can be a tool in building Christian communities and God's kingdom as we 'bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2)." This biblical principle guided Raid, a poor Iowa farm boy, through 91 years of faith-filled living.

Howard Raid on the farm in Missouri
Photo provided

Gone. Lost. In 1926, Raid's family lost their Iowa farm. A few months later, his father, a sometimes farmer and traveling salesman, disappeared. As the eldest of five children at age 14, Raid assumed the responsibilities of raising his siblings and supporting the family with the help of his mother, Clara.

As an adult reflecting on these experiences, Raid writes, "He (Harvey) was not a role model I wanted to follow … his leaving made me strongly determined to prove that we could make a success of our lives." As a young teen, Raid's feelings must also have included anger, fear and frustration along with what emerged as fierce determination.

> Raid played key roles in developing Mennonite organizations, including Mennonite Mutual Aid, Association of Mennonite Aid Societies, Mennonite Foundation, Goodville Mutual Casualty Company and Menno Travel.

Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, Iowa, provided a safety net for this family. The church hired Raid as custodian for $100 a year. While he fired the coal furnace, he read C. Henry Smith's *Story of the Mennonites* and other books. He discovered the history of his mother's people. He was thrilled to read about their convictions against war, about confession of faith as an adult, about living simply and speaking the truth with simple yeses and nos. He read about mutual aid, caring and concern for members of the faith. He realized that what his family without its father was experiencing in this congregation was part of something bigger. There were Mennonites around the world, and he belonged to them. His early enthusiasm for Mennonite history and beliefs prepared him for the time when he would teach in the same college as the famous C. Henry Smith and take the last class of Mennonite history Smith taught there. Speakers from Bluffton and Bethel colleges and Mennonite missionaries also helped form Raid's lifelong interest in service, church, education and learning. These experiences helped shape him for when he would assume key roles as a leader and builder of Mennonite programs and organizations.

During college days he drove an early morning and late evening milk delivery route and worked in a bakery. For several years he taught and served as superintendent at rural Iowa schools. With the draft and war fever high, as a conscientious objector, Raid was pressured to leave teaching. He changed the rural context from teaching to preaching at Bethel Mennonite Church, Fortuna, Mo. There he started a model farm to help locals increase productivity and diversify.

The larger body of Mennonites again inspired Raid during the 1945 General Conference (GC) sessions at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan. Following that conference, both E.G. Kaufman and Lloyd Ramseyer, presidents of Bethel and Bluffton colleges, respectively, offered Raid a teaching position. Raid walked through the door that opened at Bluffton after completing his master's degree at Iowa State University. Later he received his doctoral degree from Ohio State University. Both degrees were in agricultural economics.

Teaching in a Mennonite college, a longtime goal, became a reality when he began teaching at Bluffton (Ohio) College (now University) in 1947. At Bluffton he developed the business and economics department, the first in a Mennonite college. The practical always preempted the academic. Raid soon realized that most of his students wanted education so they could facilitate more productive farms or businesses already in the family. Building strong Mennonite communities depended on these young people's commitment to biblical teachings of mutual aid and service along with their education. Business and faith belonged together.

At a time when investing in the stock market was suspect, he organized the Boom or Bust Investment Club to teach students about markets and money management. He purchased the Bluffton Slaw Cutter factory and set up the Business Management Lab to give students hands-on experience in all aspects of running a business. This model proved a forerunner to internships. During his 35 years of teaching and after, he served as a strong mentor for many students. They remember Doc Raid always having time for "his boys." "Give 10 percent, save 10 percent and live on the rest." "Remember your family, church and community." "Honesty is the best policy, but if it's the best policy, it's not honest" were among his favorite and well-remembered sayings. Howard practiced what he preached.

In 1949, to help young farmers and businesspeople stay in the community, Raid worked with the four Bluffton/Pandora Mennonite churches to start Mennonite Brotherhood Aid, a program of economic assistance and financial counseling. By organizing the Bluffton Swiss Historical Society and writing a weekly newspaper column for 14 years, he helped preserve local history.

In his home congregation of Bluffton's First Mennonite, he served in leadership roles, including writing The First Seventy-Five Years history. Howard and his wife, Pauline, befriended several refugee families sponsored by the church. His wood-working shop provided hands-on interaction, overcoming language and cultural barriers.

The Central District and GC denominational Board of Business Administration, where he served for 12 years, benefited from Raid's business background and experience. He served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) coordinating travel to Mennonite World Conference in Amsterdam in the summer of 1967, then from 1967-1969 as president of Freeman (S.D.) Junior College.

Part of the builder generation, Raid played key roles in developing Mennonite organizations, including Mennonite Mutual Aid, Association of Mennonite Aid Societies, Mennonite Foundation, Goodville Mutual Casualty Company and Menno Travel. His was often the lone GC Mennonite voice among strong (Old) Mennonite (MC) leaders, including Orie Miller, Harold L. Swartzendruber, Samuel S. Wenger and Guy F. Hershberger.

Raid's business skills and training as an economist were critical to these organizations, yet he felt marginalized because he was GC, a business person and from a poor family. J. Winfield Fretz and Elmer Ediger became GC colleagues and allies. Raid drew on his growing-up experiences and challenges he faced with his brothers in 1946 when they formed the Raid Brothers' Construction Company, an Iowa limestone quarry business to help support their growing families. "Look for the areas of strength and build on those; weed out the dead areas that are choking growth," Raid advised them.

A builder of bridges, Raid never sought personal power. Following the biblical call for mutual aid and stewardship meant service was more important than chairing a committee.

In July 1955, MCC sponsored a conference in Chicago on mutual aid with Orie Miller as spokesperson. At that first joint (MC-GC) mutual aid meeting, one of the (Old) Mennonite members remarked, "There is still a lot of curiosity about each other. I took a good look at everyone and discovered that you GCs weren't so frightening after all. We have a lot in common when it comes to issues for the brotherhood." A low laughter rippled through the groups as they imagined GCs and MCs looking each other over. All agreed that their purpose for organizing was to serve a need for Christian witness for the church and not to fulfill purely economic needs.

Raid wrote that he was elected the chairman of the group that year. "That election was amazing, as I was of the GC Mennonite church. The politics showed at the next conference, when it was arranged for an (Old) Mennonite to chair those sessions." A builder of bridges, Raid never sought

Howard Raid in his workshop
Photo provided

Howard Raid with carrots from his garden
Photo provided

personal power. Following the biblical call for mutual aid and stewardship meant service was more important than chairing a committee.

Raid looked for meaning in life experiences and common threads for weaving a strong faith community. His deep roots in the Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, Iowa, led him to write the family histories of his forebears, such as his great-great-grandfather Henry Ellenberger, the first ordained Mennonite minister west of the Mississippi River, and that of Raid's wife, Pauline Krehbiel's family. These ancestors were instrumental in founding the General Conference Mennonite Church. Raid chaired the centennial celebration of that founding in 1960 and helped plan a study conference, "Christian Unity in Faith and Witness." Delegates and friends came from all parts of North America to hear John Howard Yoder, E.G. Kaufman, William Klassen, Erland Waltner, Olin Krehbiel and others speak and preach.

The original purpose in 1860 was "to unify all Mennonites and strengthen their efforts in missions, publication and education, ... for greater unity in faith and witness ... [and] a polity of congregational government, thus recognizing variety." Unity in diversity, building bridges of faith, fit Raid's model of Christian living in a complex world. That study conference's influence extended into the integration process of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the (Old) Mennonite Church, now Mennonite Church USA.

After retirement from Bluffton in 1979, Raid served as volunteer archivist, establishing archives for the college and Mennonite mutual aid organizations. An interesting Pen Pal friendship developed with comedian Phyllis Diller, who attended Bluffton. She was looking for her Ohio family and religious roots.

Faithful living, adaptability and building bridges through the biblical principles of mutual aid, stewardship, peace and service, Raid's core values, were again tested and stretched in his later years. During Pauline's terminal illness, Raid was grateful for the mutual aid extended to them.

His own years of growing old mirror some of the tragedy of his growing-up years. Yet his strong faith accompanied him, even as the prophet promises in Deuteronomy 33:25b: "As your days, so shall your strength be."

At age 91, he sat at his desk, book in hand. The walnut desk he made in 1941 looked out of place in his small room in the care facility. Gone were the letters from friends, family and former students. Gone were his files on family history, church organizations and college and business associates. Only his well-marked and worn Bible remained. His life seemed as empty as his desk. Wearing a white shirt, tie and dark trousers, his standard professional dress, he presented himself with dignity.

The doctor's pronouncement of Alzheimer's met his blank stare.

"Reach out a helping hand," among the last words he uttered, speak to us today. If Raid could continue this conversation, he might ask church leaders how they are following biblical principles of mutual aid, peace and service. He might challenge them to encourage youth and provide practical hands-on ways for them to contribute to church and community. He might ask each of us: "How are you reaching out a helping hand to those around you? What bridges are you building that strengthen Mennonite Church USA for witness in the world?"

Elizabeth Raid is a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan. She has written a biography, Howard D. Raid, Innovator, Entrepreneur and Pioneer: Man of Faith and Vision, *Foreword by Robert S. Kreider, and is looking for a Mennonite publisher. She may be reached at raideliz@hotmail.com.*

The strength in our singing

by Faye M. Nyce

The healing power of our congregation singing in one voice

I sat in church,
enveloped in my sadness.
Pam, our only daughter,
our beloved daughter,
was, by all apparent signs,
dying from cancer.
Why had this cruel illness
chosen her? ▶

Loanne Harms

She was 42, with a husband and two sons, ages 9 and 12. We all needed and wanted her. Why would a person who has always been healthy suddenly have this diagnosis? Though I have been a Christian for many years, I now doubted God's wisdom. Though many believe "it is all a part of God's plan," I did not want anyone to say these words me. The phrase "God knows best" was beyond anything I could heed. Nearly all our friends at church were sensitive and kind in their words of support. This was an invaluable gift.

> Though physically I could not sing at the moment, I knew that my life will flow on "above earth's lamentation," even though there would be many days that would feel dark and dreary.

The congregation was singing "Come, Ye Disconsolate," and I thought, without a doubt, I was disconsolate. The last line of each verse was surely sung this morning for me: "Earth has no sorrows that Heav'n cannot heal" or "cure" or "remove." The strength of the voices of the entire congregation singing these words as one voice gave me a minuscule piece of assurance.

This unified harmony added strength to the words. It was two weeks after Easter. The pastor appealed to us to keep Easter alive in our hearts. He stated, "Christ is risen. He is risen indeed."

I barely noticed his words. Later the congregation sang "My Life Flows On." I remembered singing this song several years earlier, when a young friend had lost her husband in divorce. The words had seemed strengthening for her, and now I took heart as everyone sang, "No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging. … How can I keep from singing?" Again, I felt strengthened at hearing the oneness in the voice of the entire congregation singing this song. Though physically I could not sing at the moment, I knew that my life will flow on "above earth's lamentation," even though there would be many days that would feel dark and dreary.

In the months and now also a few years since our daughter's death, there are many days that I ask, Why? We need her so much. Her children need her so much.

Last year my husband and I attended a Hospice retreat. One morning we were invited to sit at round tables. In front of us were hammers and pillow cases and a brand new, clean clay pot for each of us. We were told to break our pots. I placed my pot into one of the pillow cases and slammed it on the floor twice, making sure it shattered into countless pieces. I wanted my pot to be as crushed as I felt. Afterward, some of the other participants tried to glue their pots back together again. I didn't try. Our lives can never be put back together as if nothing happened. Neither could I use some of the decorations provided to adorn my pot as some others were doing. I knew I could bring neither beauty nor sense out of what this

pot had been before it was so viciously broken. I am angry at the cancer that ravaged my daughter's body, then sucked her life away. I have the recognition that I have to live with my "broken pieces."

Life will never be the same, and though I know full well that I must go on and accept the "new normal," I cannot hoodwink myself into living as though Pam's death had not happened. False acceptance of this would be more than stressful. I know all the platitudes and don't need to hear them quoted to me. That does not help. The love, acceptance and especially the listening of friends is the gift I cherish.

Several months ago, a lady from our church told me she keeps a picture of Pam on her refrigerator to remind her to pray for us. What a gift! I could not adequately find the words to convey to her my appreciation. This lady had not even known Pam but found the picture after the memorial service when coming to lock up the church. This kind of "loving support" is enormously comforting.

Some days I wonder, What is she doing up there anyway? Why was it so all-important that she went when she did, leaving all the rest of us here without her, and especially leaving two young sons. She had wanted to live and see them grow up. Breaking that clay pot was an apt mode of dealing with my spirit. But I could not sing when I broke the pot. My congregation was not present at this retreat to sing for me. I needed to be reassured by the community of believers singing our faith.

Though a few years have passed since Pam's death, and though we have had many kind, supportive friends as well as compassionate care from people we didn't even know, my heart will be permanently broken. Yet my head knows that faith is more than what I see or feel. I know that God is present and walks with me. The strength I felt in the corporate singing of our congregation, even when I could not sing, sustains me—these people, singing, are a powerful source of belief and trust in God for me. They continue to sing Sunday after Sunday. The songs are vital to my walk with God.

These people, singing, are a powerful source of belief and trust in God for me.

I am comforted to know that I belong to this group of people that believes God is here for the disconsolate. Singing with this congregation of fellow believers regenerates my faith. With their support and the grace of God, I can go forward, believing my life can flow on.

Faye M. Nyce is a member of Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Amazing grace
that saves Christians and other wretches

By the normal, human standards of justice, this idea of grace presents some serious problems.

by Ken Gibble

Where do you stand on this business of amazing grace? I don't mean the hymn. I mean the idea of grace, the doctrine of it. Do you believe that the mistakes of the past, the wrongs a person has done, even grievous wrongs, can be wiped away once and for all by God's love and mercy? Can someone, anyone, you, be freed from a lifetime burden of guilt by the grace of God? Is that grace poured out, without condition, so liberally that it can, in the words of the famous hymn, save the person who once was lost, give sight to blind eyes?

That's what the Christian faith proclaims. Many volumes of theology have been written on the subject of grace, but sometimes it finds its best expression in the most unlikely places. A character in John Irving's novel *A Prayer for Owen Meany* puts it like this: "The point is, God doesn't love us because we're smart or because we're good. We're stupid and we're bad and God loves us anyway."

What makes that statement so unlikely is that it's spoken by a character in the novel whose speech is liberally sprinkled with cuss words.

But that says it about as plainly as it can be said: God doesn't love you or me because we're smart or even because we're good. By the normal, human standards of justice, this idea of grace presents some serious problems.

Some time back I listened to a presentation by a college philosophy professor. His subject was Islam. He told us the Islamic faith stresses justice: good behavior is to be rewarded, bad behavior is to be punished, both on the human level and the sacred level. The presenter said that even though he was a Christian minister and had many times taught and preached the doctrine of grace, he thought the approach of Islam made a whole lot more sense.

It does, doesn't it? Shouldn't good behavior be rewarded and bad behavior suffer consequences? There's something in us that objects to sinful deeds going unpunished, even our own sinful deeds. A character in another contemporary novel expresses this point of view. Referring to the practice in Catholicism of the faithful declaring sins to a priest in the confessional booth, this character says: "Confession is a thing I can't agree with. I say it's cheap. You kneel down in that box and say what you done. And then, basically, you get off scot-free, only cranking out a few hail Marys or some Our Fathers. No restitution demanded, no community service" (Louise Erdrich, *The Bingo Palace*).

The Bible itself struggles with the issue of God's grace. Some passages of Scripture demand the highest moral standards of the faithful. Other passages tell of God's great love for everyone, even for the vilest of sinners.

Two examples: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? … So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:14,17).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If the writers of Scripture can't seem to agree, then we can perhaps be excused for being a bit confused ourselves.

God doesn't love you or me because we're smart or even because we're good.

Correction:
For information on an updated survey from Jeanette Harder, go to www.DovesNest.net

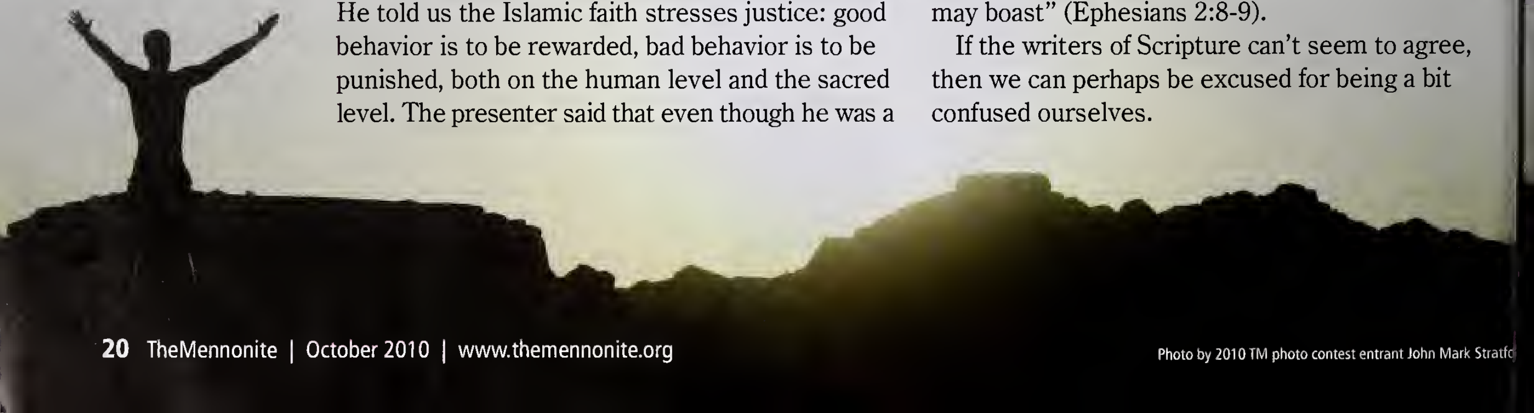


Photo by 2010 TM photo contest entrant John Mark Stratf

One of the best explorations of this debate I've come across appears in Anne Tyler's novel *Saint Maybe*. The story is about Ian, a young man who blames himself for causing his brother's death in a car accident. Actually the death resulted from circumstances beyond Ian's control, but he blames himself nonetheless. Distraught by guilt, Ian one evening wanders into a storefront church. During the prayer time, he says to the small group of worshipers: "Pray for me to be good again. Pray for me to be forgiven." After the service, Ian is feeling better. He asks the minister, "Don't you think I'm forgiven?"

"Goodness, no," Reverend Emmett said briskly.

Ian's mouth fell open. He wondered if he'd misunderstood. He said, "I'm not forgiven?"

"Oh, no."

"But … I thought that was kind of the point," Ian said. "I thought God forgives everything."

"He does," Reverend Emmett said. "But you can't just say, 'I'm sorry, God.' Why, anyone could do that much. You have to offer reparation—concrete, practical reparation, according to the rules of our church."

The form that Ian's reparation takes is the financial support of his brother's stepchildren. It's a heavy burden for such a young man, but he sacrifices his own plans in order to atone for his guilt.

At the end of the novel, the reader is left to wonder whether Ian did the right thing. On the one hand, he did make a positive difference in the lives of his brother's stepchildren. On the other hand, he spends much of his own life suffering from a burden of guilt that even his good deeds do not eliminate. He doesn't find grace until the end of the novel. And it comes in a way that has nothing to do with his sacrifice.

I ask again, Where do you come out on this business of amazing grace? Maybe it is too easy, too cheap. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian martyred by the Nazis, warned of what he called "cheap grace." In his own words: "[With cheap grace] no contrition is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, … grace without discipleship, grace without the cross" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*).

Bonhoeffer's words ring true. Surely it's a mistake to think of God as an indulgent grandparent who turns a blind eye to the wrongdoings of humanity. Our faith teaches that the cost of salvation was the cross of Calvary. This is costly grace indeed. But it is God's grace that saves us, not our own efforts.

John Newton was the son of an English sea captain. At the age of 11 Newton went to sea himself and after some years captained his own ship, one that carried African slaves. Converted to Christian faith, Newton left his old life behind to become a minister and hymn writer. Remembering his former lifestyle and his part in the evils of slavery, Newton wrote the words that have become beloved by millions.

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see."

I came across a church hymnal that had taken some liberties with Newton's words. Apparently the editors objected to the word "wretch." I suppose to them it sounded so, well, wretched. Most people who sing this hymn aren't wretches, the editors probably reasoned; they're good people, most of them churchgoers. So they substituted the phrase "saveth men like me."

It was a bad decision, not only because it used that noninclusive word "men" but because not one of us escapes the state of wretchedness at various times in our lives. We mess up, sometimes badly. We slip into petty hatreds, betray confidences, remain silent in the face of injustice, break promises, fail to love our neighbors as ourselves, fail even to love ourselves properly. There are times when we feel our lives amount to nothing more or less than colossal failures. We may even hate ourselves.

It is God's grace that saves us, not our own efforts.

Wretch is the word for it. A wretch like me. A wretch like you. My closing word on the matter is simply this: When I bring my life into the presence of the Holy One, I really don't want justice. I don't want what I deserve. I want mercy, divine mercy. I want God's amazing grace.

What do you want?

Ken Gibble lives in Greencastle, Pa.

When you chair the committee

15 tips

on how to do it well

by J. Nelson Kraybill

Committee meetings are a place where minutes are kept and hours are lost. That, at least, is the jaundiced view of an anonymous wit who voiced the frustration sometimes felt by anyone who sits on committees or boards across the church.

If managed well, committee meetings can be life-giving and enjoyable. This is good, because committees are essential for the church and its agencies to take part in God's mission. I have participated in hundreds of meetings over the past decades and have learned a few things that a committee chair can do to make them worthwhile.

What follows reflects my chairing style as a white, western, middle-class, university-educated male. Others, such as people from racial/ethnic sectors of the church, immigrants or women, might propose a different checklist. In any case, it is important for a committee chair to understand the culture(s) of people at the table and lead in a way that brings out the best in each. Based on my experience, when you are chair of a committee for the church or its agencies, I recommend that you do the following:

1. Keep the mandate of your committee in view. What is the big mission of the church or organization and how does your committee fit into that? What is the extent and what is the limit of your responsibility as a committee? To whom do you report, by when?

2. Embrace your role as a spiritual leader. While there are exceptions, most committee meetings are not the place for long periods of Bible teaching or prayer. Those should be happening elsewhere in the rhythm of church or institutional life. But the chair can remind the committee that what they do matters to God and to the church and can incorporate prayer or meditation into committee meetings.

3. Be a good steward of group time. Start the meeting on time, confirm with the group when the meeting is to end and be cautious about going beyond the contracted time. Important or urgent agenda may occasionally require you to go overtime. But this must be the exception, and the chair should ask permission of the group before extending the session. If committee meetings too frequently go overtime, church members will be hesitant to take part.

4. Create an agenda for the meeting in advance. Do this by reading previous minutes (especially action points), reviewing the mandate of the committee and soliciting agenda items from committee members or others to whom the committee is responsible.

5. Have someone assigned to take minutes. Often this means giving them advance notice so they can bring a computer. Without keeping good records, decisions and wisdom that come from the group may be lost or muddled.

The chair can remind the committee that what they do matters to God and to the church and can incorporate prayer or meditation into committee meetings.

6. Start the meeting with a warm welcome and a positive spirit. If the committee chair is not hospitable and hopeful, group spirits will sag. In some committees it is appropriate to have a limited time for committee members to relate significant developments in their lives or in the community you serve. Such sharing should be brief, since committees are not primarily a place to address personal agenda. It often works well to have prayer together after such sharing.

7. Review together the minutes of the last meeting(s). Do this before heading into new agenda. Call attention to highlights from the minutes, such as decisions taken or assignments made, rather than reading the entire minutes aloud. Ask the committee members whether you missed anything important.

8. Lead the group through the meeting's agenda. Watch the clock and pace discussion so you get through the agenda in the allotted time. This is hard work because it requires you both to be a nonanxious presence and to keep things

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moving. For each agenda item, have someone (you or another committee member) give a succinct summary of the issue at hand: "Today we must address concerns about adequacy of child care during worship. There is a letter from a parent attached to our agenda." Such summarizing helps committee members focus on what they must decide and may bring to light different opinions about what is the real issue.

> While frivolity should never dominate a meeting, a little bit goes a long way to relax the group and make committee work enjoyable.

9. Hear from all committee members. Or at least hear from all who wish to speak or who should speak. Show with your body language that you are listening carefully and that you value each contribution. You might succinctly summarize what a committee member has said to show that you understand. Politely intervene and redirect discussion if one or two people dominate or if the group heads into a tangent that is not relevant to the issue at hand or if one person simply talks too long. This is an important part of your stewardship of time.

10. Wait to offer your own perspective. Your first task is to see that the issue to be decided is clearly stated, that necessary information is available and that committee members bring their insight and creativity to bear. If you speak your opinion too soon, you may short-circuit the contributions of others. After others have spoken, it may be helpful for you as chair to offer your perspective. Show by listening respectfully that it is fine for others to disagree with you or to challenge you.

11. Take time for humor. So long as humor is decent and not at the expense of others, it is good to laugh. Enjoy your own foibles and failures as a group and as an individual. God's work is important, but do not take yourselves too seriously. Laugh at yourself, not at the expense of another. Tell funny things that happened and allow friendly kidding. While frivolity should never dominate a meeting, a little bit goes a long way to relax the group and make committee work enjoyable.

12. Prioritize agenda if you are running out of time. If you see you will not be able to cover all agenda items, point this out to the group and get them to help you decide which items can wait until the next meeting.

13. Let the group hear a summary of discussion before deciding. After hearing from everyone who should speak, offer a tentative summary of where the committee members appear to be at on the agenda item: "While we are not in total agreement, most of us lean in the direction of expanding the child-care program during worship services. Am I hearing you right?" Watch the body language of others as you speak. If the preliminary summary does not please someone on the committee or if they think it misses something important, invite them to offer their own summary. When the committee agrees on the summary, have the committee make a formal decision by consensus or by vote.

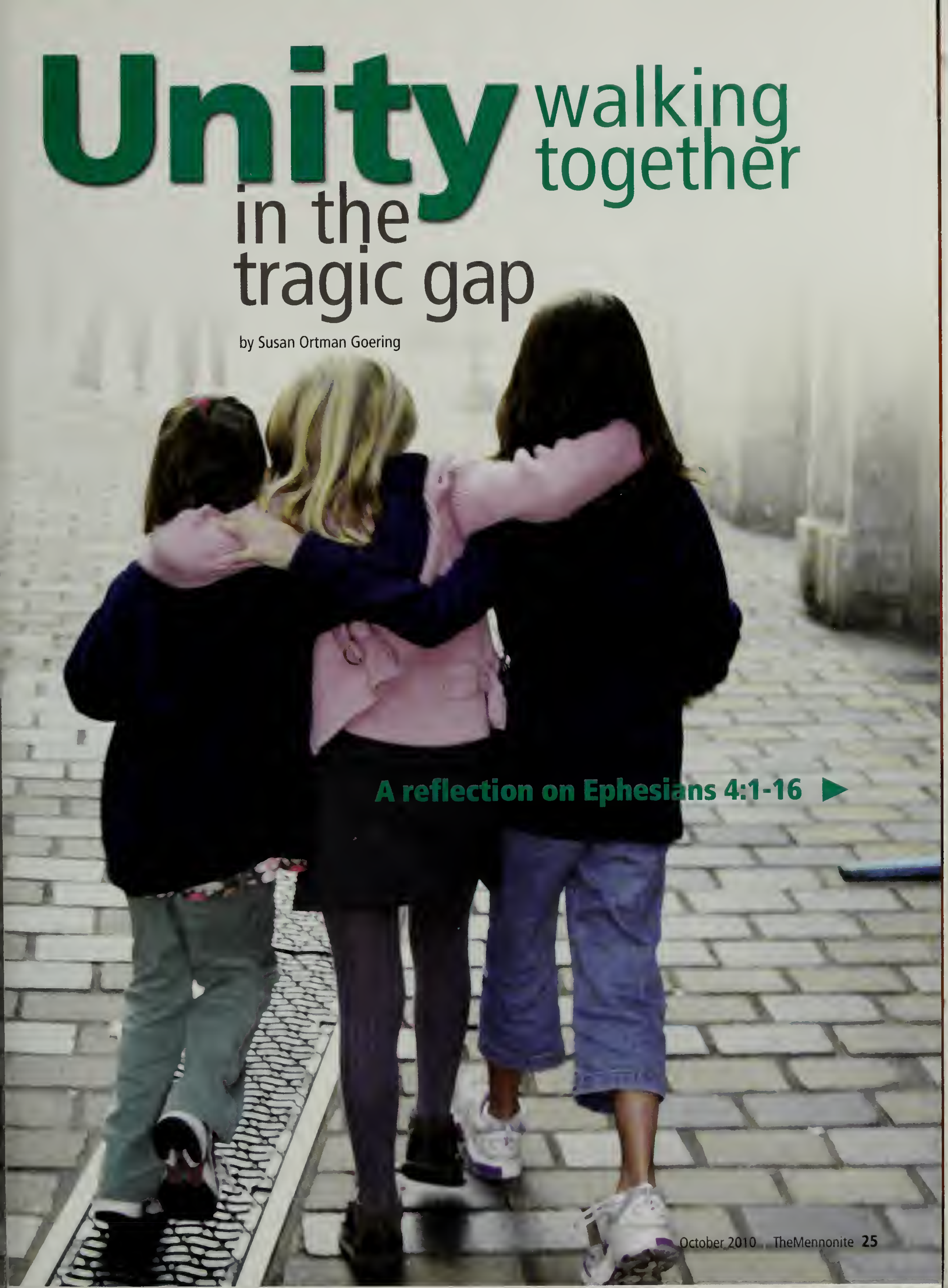
14. Make action points after the committee decides, and minute them. Be clear about who will follow up with any assignment and by when. Such items must be clearly marked or highlighted in the minutes. It works well to have a check-box in the margins of the minutes beside the action point. That is easy for you and others to see when you scan the minutes later and allows you to mark the box when the assignment has been completed.

15. Set next meeting time(s) and thank committee members. Affirm the committee for work done well, thank them for their part in the mission of the church and send them on their way with blessing. Rejoice that you have the privilege of helping others make their contribution to the reign of God.

J. Nelson Kraybill is pastor at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., and author of Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation *(Brazos Press, 2010). See review on page 59.*

Unity walking together in the tragic gap

by Susan Ortman Goering



A reflection on Ephesians 4:1-16 ▶

As Christians we are called to live in unity. No book makes that clearer than Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians is a different book. Its structure is different from Paul's other letters. It contains extensive references, in some cases direct quotes, from Paul's other letters. In fact, about a third of Colossians appears in Ephesians in some form. References to the church are not to individual congregations or groups of congregations but to the whole church. (See *Ephesians: Believers Church Bible Commentary* by Tom Yoder Neufeld.)

Scholars have long puzzled over this book. To whom was it written? When was it written? Who wrote it?

Some scholarship would say that Ephesians was written after Paul's death. If this is true, it is likely it was written by one of Paul's students. It was not unusual in that day for students to follow the style of their master and use their master's name. This does not diminish Ephesians' value or importance. It simply points to the tremendous influence of Paul's life and work. Paul was able to stand in the middle of fledgling, struggling, disagreeing Christians and continue to pull the church together toward its center, which is Jesus Christ. That effort continued, even after his death by those who came after him. That effort goes on today. Thanks be to God.

A unity that comes because people are afraid to address concerns or disagreements is not a true unity.

Ephesians 4 calls us to unity. That is our calling as believers. The author begs us to lead a life worthy of our calling. With humility and gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we are called to remember that there is one body … one Spirit … one Lord, one faith, one baptism … one God (verses 1-4).

In Jesus Christ we have been given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers so that all the saints may be equipped for ministry, to build up the body of Christ (verses 11-12). Our leaders are called truly to be leaders. We are invited to come to a place where we speak the truth in love, such that we grow together into Christ. When we work properly, the body builds itself up in love (verses 15-16). This is a profound call to unity, perhaps the most profound in all of Scripture.

The author does not deny differences; rather they are addressed directly. He addresses concerns about a congregation to that specific congregation, and more than once if need be. He speaks firmly but lovingly. We can learn from Paul. A unity that comes because people are afraid to address concerns or disagreements is not a true unity. A unity that comes because some people are marginalized or pushed out of the church is not a true unity. A unity that comes because people talk about person A to person B is not a true unity. That is true in local congregations and the larger Mennonite church as well.

Alas, we struggle. We do not want to experience the discomfort of conflict. Do Mennonites avoid conflict more than other folks? I don't know. I doubt it. But I do know that most of us don't like conflict. And when faced with conflict, all too often we revert to some primitive reflex that causes us either to fight or flee.

In *Weavings* (March-April 2009), Parker Palmer wrote an article called "The Broken-Open Heart: Living with Faith and Hope in the Tragic Gap." He calls us to acknowledge places of tension in our lives, places of conflict and disagreement. Palmer calls the separation between what is and what can be the tragic gaps in our lives. He invites us to live with the uneasiness of the tragic gap rather than avoiding the gap or closing the gap prematurely.

The church, at macro and micro levels, is rightly a place for us to learn to hold tension in our hearts, to live in the tragic gap between what is and what can be. Leaders in the church must model this and encourage the spiritual practices that will allow all the church to grow in this way.

In 1986 and 1987, resolutions on homosexuality were adopted at Saskatoon and Purdue by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, respectively. These resolutions included statements that sexual activity is to be reserved for men and women in the context of marriage. They also include calls for continued biblical study and dialogue.

Attempts at dialogue resulted in tension. Eventually, church publications declared a moratorium on letters and articles on the teaching position of the church on homosexuality. Seminars or workshops at national conventions were restricted or not allowed. Perhaps this was necessary for a time. The Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church were in the midst of the process of integration. Trust and relationships needed to be developed.

However, we all knew that the elephant was in the living room. In the last few months, people began to ask again that we begin to discuss the elephant. An "Open Letter" was circulated. Convention 2009 included the presence of folks wearing pink T-shirts. Others felt the Open Letter was too confrontive. The pink T-shirts were seen as confrontational. People felt tension and discomfort.

The question for all of us is whether we dare enter the tragic gap, the place of our disagreement and separation—between what is and what might be. This is what it means to agree and disagree in love. Are we willing to stay in this gap, to dialogue when we do not agree? My fervent prayer is that the answer is yes. I pray for our leadership. I pray for all our Mennonite Church USA congregations. I pray that we will dare call on the spirit of our loving Lord and live together for a time in this tragic gap. I pray that you will join my prayer, and join me as I try to stay in the gap.

Palmer calls us to stand in the tragic gap. In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson, invites us to walk together. "You are to walk, better yet to run, on the road God called you to travel … you were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction. You have one master, one faith, one baptism" (from verses 1-4). This image of movement may be helpful.

I have an image of the tragic gap. It is a huge circle. We are in this circle, moving around and bumping into each other. In this image, the bumps are not meant to push someone out of the circle or hurt someone. In this image, nobody bolts from the circle. Instead we stay and bump for a while, and as we do that, no matter how uncomfortable or painful it is, we get continued clarity about God's will for us as a people. We continue to grow up into Christ, our head.

It is a hard calling, a high calling. Can it be reached? Yes, it can.

John Woolman and the Society of Friends show us what is possible. Woolman was born in 1720 to a Quaker family. He grew up to be a clerk and a tailor. As such, he often wrote legal documents for people. At the time, Quakers had no common understanding related to slavery, and many in the Society of Friends were slaveowners.

Are we willing to stay in this gap, to dialogue when we do not agree?

Woolman experienced a growing awareness that slavery was wrong. At the age of 23 he refused to write a bill of sale for a slave. He steadfastly refused to draw up wills transferring slaves. In a nonconfrontational way, he encouraged slaveowners to free their slaves. When he received hospitality from a slaveowner, he personally paid the slaves who had served him in some way.

He traveled extensively from Meeting to Meeting, state to state, sharing his conviction. His own Meeting did not agree with him. Despite their resistance and disagreement, his own Meeting did nothing to marginalize him or quiet him or exclude him. Indeed, his Meeting helped support his family while he traveled to other places, thus making it possible for him to continue this work. He was a lone voice, dissenting from the status quo.

Neither did he despair and leave to form a new church. For almost 30 years, until his death in 1772, he continued his lonely work. While he saw some change in his lifetime, he never saw the full fruits of his labor. Years after his death, the Society of Friends petitioned the U.S. Congress for the abolition of slavery. (See www.qis.net/~daruma/woolman/.htd and "John Woolman: Reflections on a Life Faithfully Lived," *Weavings*, March-April 2009.)

We are called to such a unity.

We are called to walk in the tragic gap, however long, until God's unifying Spirit is clear to us, and the gap is no more.

Susan Ortman Goering is co-pastor at Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from a sermon she gave there on July 19, 2009.

Pilgrimage across the Isle of Iona. Photo by Steve Thomas

The journey is the destination

by Steve Thomas

What's the point of a pilgrimage? In the practice of journeying to places of spiritual significance, there's the adventure of travel. There's the joy of discovery and inspiration of sites and saints. But there's something much more.

Christian life is a continuous journey of following Jesus.

Together with Linda, my wife, I had the good fortune of going on a Celtic spirituality pilgrimage during a sabbatical. With itinerary in hand and distant destinations in mind, we set out for Ireland, Scotland and England.

Our journey to the Isle of Iona was especially wonderful. It involved a daylong trek by train through valleys, along lakes and across fields dotted with buttercups, a bus ride and a couple of ferry crossings to reach this island off the coast of Scotland. Founded in 536 C.E. by St. Columba, Iona was the center of Celtic Christianity, with a vibrant community, rich spirituality and energetic mission to Western Europe. So far is the reach of Iona that some songs in our Mennonite hymnal are from the thriving ecumenical community reestablished there.

I note in my journal: "Approaching the Abbey of Iona is enchanting, surrounded by rugged beauty and bare simplicity. There is something almost magical about the place. No wonder it's regarded as a 'thin space.' In this place far, far away from modern civilization, people find a space in which to engage their spiritual quest for God. And in this I discover a labyrinth-like pilgrimage where there is no final destination as much as a continual journey of seeking and finding God along the way."

Here I realize the journey is the destination. As with a previous pilgrimage to the Holy Land, I thought in setting out on this pilgrimage that its historic sites were our destinations only to discover that the journey is what it's really about.

Not only is the journey the destination, what matters more than places are people. We traveled in the company of pilgrims and encountered others along the way. We told our stories and touched one another's lives. We shared our joys and struggles. We spoke of our quest for God. We laughed a lot and had fun. Together we discovered that more than the destinations, our conversations made the journey a joy.

Historic saints certainly have their place as exemplars of Christian faith. But along the way, living people have their stories that speak of God's presence in life today. With this awareness we can refocus our attention on God's presence here and now and not simply back there and then in history.

What would it be like to extend this lesson to all of life? That more than past history or future salvation, our present journey is the destination? That greater than the inspiration of holy sites and saints is the power of here and now. That being present to God and others is what matters most in the pilgrimage of life?

Biblical stories emphasize the journey more than the destination. The story of Abraham and Sarah's movement from Haran to Canaan focuses more on how they journeyed than arriving at their destination. Likewise with Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Rather than leading Israel straight along the King's Highway to Canaan, "God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness" (Exodus 13:8). This didn't last four months or four years, but 40 years. It appears that being present to the journey rather than focused on the destination is what God intends.

Being present to the journey is difficult to practice for those of us stuck in the past, focused on the future or set on goals.

The Gospels tell the story of Jesus' journey from the Jordan River, through the wilderness and to the Sea of Galilee, where he calls people to follow him. And where does he lead them? On a journey. At the end of his Gospel, Luke records how the disciples encountered Christ on the road to Emmaus, and at the beginning of Acts he notes how Jesus sends his friends out from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and on to the ends of the earth. With all the emphasis on traveling it's no wonder Christians were first called followers of "the Way" (Acts 9.2).

Christian life is a continuous journey of following Jesus. While the biblical narrative speaks of heaven as our destination, it points to the immediate journey of loving God and others along the way here and now, right where we're at.

Being present to the journey is difficult to practice for those of us stuck in the past, focused on the future or set on goals. Our pilgrimage can be so set on our past that we miss encountering others with us here. We can be so intent on our future that we don't enjoy and extend God's abundant life now. We are often so preoccupied with achieving tasks that we are not truly present to life.

Tutka Bay in Alaska Photo by Steve Thomas

It's hard to remain mindful that the journey is the destination. I recall how I failed to hold this while kayak camping in Alaska in the second month of my sabbatical. One morning I was so intent on pushing myself to Yukon Island that I didn't enjoy the journey through Tutka Bay flanked by snow-capped mountains, lush vegetation and bald eagles perched in the trees. I was too focused on the goal of getting there that I missed being there.

We don't have to go on a long journey somewhere to find God.

Then I noticed the jellyfish. Lest in anxious toil I forgot this lesson, God lined the way with jellyfish like ones I saw at Iona—floating in the current, moving with slow, rhythmic pulses, not set on a certain destination but flowing along the way. Here was a call to enjoy the journey by moving with the grace of a jellyfish, carried in the Spirit's current.

When we returned to our kayak outfitter I "just happened" to find a T-shirt imprinted with "The Journey is the Destination," which I purchased to remind me of this truth.

Revisiting my journal as we left Iona I read: "This pilgrimage was a compressed spiritual journey. Along the way I realized it is not the end but the journey that matters. Like walking a labyrinth and reaching the center, arriving at holy places is not what counts so much. The journey with others is what was most enriching, revealing that conversation with companions along the way matters much more than reaching certain destinations. What Linda and I enjoyed most was the company of others and what we shared together as people of the Way and encountering other spiritual communities on our journey."

I want to live with this word. We don't have to go on a long journey somewhere to find God. In the pilgrimage of life, our call is to be attentive to God within us and all around us. To be present to the Spirit in all things. And to enjoy our journey with Jesus.

Steve Thomas served as pastor of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., for 20 years and now directs Peacemakers, a peace education initiative in Goshen. This article is based on his experience with the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Celtic Spirituality Pilgrimage. His sabbatical was funded by Lilly Endowment's Clergy Renewal Program.

A first-person testimony about responding to a self-inflicted death

Standing in the doorway

by Ernest D. Martin

The community was in shock. A 63-year-old husband, father and friend of many had violently ended his life. Few had any awareness of the psychological/mental struggles he had been experiencing. He was well-known for his musical gifts and ability, teaching in two schools and having many private students. A variety of churches in the community appreciated him.

The family asked me to give the meditation at a memorial in three days. Before retiring 18 years earlier, I had been his pastor. We sang together many times. I was not surprised by the request, but I had no notion of what to say on such an occasion. My pastoral experience had not included a self-inflicted death. Because of another commitment, preparation time was limited. I was blessed by the counsel and suggestions of several pastoral colleagues and the prayers of many as I listened for what the Lord would have me say.

I met with the family and conducted the graveside committal. A diverse assembly filled Midway Mennonite Church that Sunday afternoon. People were at various stages of their grief. Feelings were confused. Questions abounded. Humanly the mission was impossible.

The opportunity. This memorial meditation afforded the possibility of offering grief therapy in a large-group setting. Serendipitously, or providentially, I came across the concept of limen. Those who have experienced an earthquake tell us that likely the safest place when the earth shakes is in a doorway. For this assembly, life had been shaken profoundly. Going back to the way it was was not possible, and the steps ahead were not at all clear. We were in a doorway. Here in this time of in-between—the experience of liminality—we could discover that the Lord of life is there with us.

In order to help people get in touch with their feelings I used lines of lament from the Scriptures. With PowerPoint technology we projected these words and phrases. I had people read them in unison—a way to verbalize and own similar thoughts and feelings. We then looked at a projection of corresponding affirmations of faith, some found in the context of the laments. We read those together.

Since this turn of human events was almost a total surprise, we needed to acknowledge the reality that those who have never entertained thoughts of suicide have no way of knowing what goes through the mind of one who loses touch with sustaining hope because of mental disorders. After exploring some of the swirling questions, I noted that even if we had explanations that made sense to us, we would still be left to deal with the disruption and pain.

Among the internal reactions people had were anger and guilt. I reminded us that the path to peace entails being honest about anger, whether toward God, other people or ourselves. I affirmed the possibility and necessity of forgiving and receiving forgiveness. I mentioned several Scriptures that indicate God's perspective and the security extended to his children. We are on solid ground to entrust to God those who have come to know and experience saving grace.

As a way to focus on life ahead, I called attention to six factors that give meaning to life. Circumstances cannot take these realities from us. None of them is of our own doing. That's why we can choose to build life on them. For example, being objects of God's love in Christ, experiencing life in the family of God and coming into the privilege of being co-laborers with God. I commended everyone there to God and his grace.

Several observations. I became aware while I was speaking that all ears were taking in every word I said. I stayed with the carefully worded pages I had prepared. Responses that day and since gave me assurance that I can still hear the voice of the Spirit. The message went through me, but as Paul put it in that paradox of grace—I, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. To God be the praise.

Ernest D. Martin is retired pastor in Columbiana, Ohio. The full text of this meditation, shared April 4, 2008, can be read at www.TheMennonite.org.

Loving those who annoy you

by Jan Johnson

A confession: I have not always loved my neighbor—especially the one next door. At first, I was annoyed by how the husband parked cars on his lawn—oops, there was no lawn, just dirt and weeds. How would this affect the resale value of my home? As the wild parties and loud fights increased, I wanted to avoid my neighbors.

But was that really an option? I'm asked to love my neighbors of all sorts, but in reality I avoided opinionated people, people who belittled what I thought was important or people who never let me finish a sentence without interrupting. I criticized such people, even if only in my thoughts. I lacked love for those I labeled "difficult."

At least by avoiding these people I wasn't hurting them, I told myself. But God kept nudging me with this question: What would it look like to love the person in front of you—even if only for the next 10 minutes, even if this person annoys you?

Heart exam: For this kind of love God requires a heart transformation. Dealing with people who mildly annoy us—the coworker who constantly puts people down, the teenager who leaves a mess in the bathroom—can create frustration and low-level hostility that becomes the routine focus of our mind. Such bitterness sneaks up on us. We nurture memories of being mistreated, snubbed or insulted. We let the sun go down on our mild wrath, so to speak, which flourishes into sarcasm, grumbling, cynicism and gossip.

A life-rhythm of everyday hostility casts a shadow on "children of the light." Such minor hostility may seem normal in today's society in which people attack each other on talk radio, but we are invited to love our neighbors, not to ignore them, avoid them or lash out at them.

God kept nudging me with this question: What would it look like to love the person in front of you—even if only for the next 10 minutes, even if this person annoys you?

Heart patterns: What could I do? I was tempted to try really hard to love difficult people, but trying harder does not work. We begin by cultivating a right heart—a heart of goodwill—toward that person. That cultivation takes place through certain spiritual practices that help us connect with God and through that vital connection build a right heart from which loving actions are more likely to flow. Here are some practices I've found particularly helpful in cultivating a heart of love for difficult people.

Prayer: One day as I was hiking, my thoughts turned to Alice (not her real name), a church friend who was being unkind and spiteful toward another friend. How could my friend act with such venom? Yet I felt guilty about my inability to love her.

As I plopped down on the side of the trail under a willow tree, the phrase "Love your enemies and

Spiritual practices for cultivating a heart of love for difficult people

pray for those who persecute you" came to mind (Matthew 5:44). Alice wasn't my enemy, but I certainly didn't love her. I tried to pray for Alice—that she would let God's love permeate her soul and pass it on. I gradually began to speak kindly toward her and to care about what happened in her life.

Confession: As I prayed for Alice, I found myself doing some soul-searching: What is in my heart toward her? Did I see myself as her victim? What did I need to do to trust God more?

I find that coming clean to God about the resentment within me—how I've avoided people or used weapons of generalization—is important. Confessing is not a time to beat myself up but to allow God to surround me with empowering grace. It's one more way to get my heart right.

Silence: There are many ways to practice silence, but one that particularly helps me keep a right heart toward others is the practice of not seeking to have the last word. Especially when someone tries to get a reaction from me or offers a final zinger, it helps my inner peace to say nothing.

I saw the power of this practice once when a family member smarted off to my sister. I immediately became irritated. My sister, however, said nothing but simply grinned at the offender. The look on that young person's face changed. She realized she'd been unkind to my sister, who was always kind to her. And I, standing off to the side, felt my irritation vanish as I felt God's grace (in my sister's face) pour over me also. It was a love-drenched silence.

Service: Sometimes God leads us to serve in order to develop a right heart in us. Many years ago, I knew an older woman who found the pastor annoying—so much so that she couldn't stand to listen to his sermons. She wanted to change so, led by God, she attended the pastor's weekly Bible study and offered to fix the coffee. I noticed that she seemed to sleep through most of the study and asked if she was tired. As we talked, she revealed to me her problem and the Spirit-suggested solution, saying, "I find myself praying for the pastor during the study. This has helped me see him differently. It was the best thing I could have done."

With my next-door neighbors, God gave me a means of service that surprised me. As an art volunteer at their daughter's elementary school, I interacted with this sweet-natured girl. This cultivated in me a loving heart for a family who managed to produce a child like this. As I befriended her in small ways—giving her an art book and visiting now and then in our driveways—her parents became more friendly, too.

> Cultivating a heart that trusts God with difficult people transforms the soul.

Cultivating a heart that trusts God with difficult people transforms the soul. As we align ourselves minute-by-minute with the one who is consistently kind even to the ungrateful, we start to take on the character of God—even if it's only 10 minutes at a time.

Jan Johnson is a speaker and the author of Invitation to the Jesus Life: Experiments in Christlikeness, *from which this article is adapted (www.janjohnson.org).*

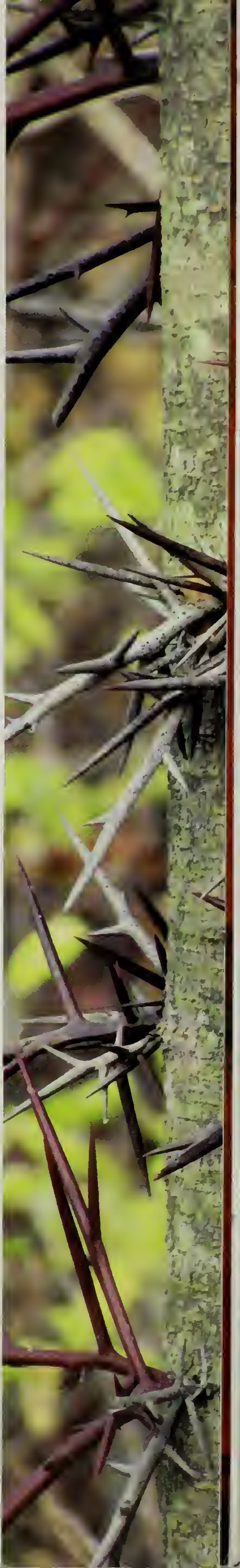


Photo by 2010 TM photo contest entrant Sandra Short

Who speaks for me?

Glen Guyton is associate executive director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA.

After having been in my role with Mennonite Church USA for just over a year now, it is clear to me that communication is one of the biggest challenges we face, not only in our denomination but also in our area conferences and congregations—and probably in our own homes. Communication across cultures, races, genders and generations can be difficult. We often seek out iconic figures who can speak on behalf of a whole group; we need a single face to help us understand what is foreign to us.

Who speaks for me? As an African-American, I ask myself this question daily as I watch the news and listen to the radio. Once upon a time, my daddy told me it was the president of the United States (this was B.O.—before Obama). I remember him asking me some fatherly question—the one that you are asked after you have obviously made a poor decision. "Why did you—?" he asked. My response was of course, "Because I thought—." (You can probably fill in the blanks with discussions you had with your parents.) The conversation ended with my father saying, "That's what you get for thinking. That's why we pay the president."

It is my faith and my relationship in Christ that serve as the basis for how I see the world and how I live my life.

Was Daddy being serious, or was this just some joke the old Mississippi country boys used to tell each other down on the farm? You see, my daddy was born in 1907, and I cannot honestly believe that a man who grew up in the segregated South during the Great Depression and two world wars could have much faith in the thinking of the Washington establishment.

But maybe my daddy was foolish enough to believe it. As I listen to the popular media, I am supposed to believe that Rev. Jesse Jackson and Rev. Al Sharpton are the eyes, ears, mouthpiece and moral compass for me because I am an African-American. When did I lose my right to think and decide for myself? When was the popular election for an African-American spokesperson? I guess I missed it. No other racial/ethnic group in our country has officials who swoop in like Batman and Robin at the slightest sign of racial injustice. Boy, are African-Americans fortunate. I wonder who the spokesperson is for Caucasians? Was it Bush? Maybe it is Fox News. Who speaks for the Hispanics, and do they have a Mexican representative, a Cuban representative and one for the Colombians? Maybe J.Lo and Ricky Martin take turns, I don't know.

Now most of the examples I have given so far have come from popular culture and from the mainstream media, but as I have worked with Mennonite Church USA Intercultural Relations, I understand that many in our church are asking, Who speaks for me? Often I and other racial/ethnic people in the church are asked to speak on behalf of our respective race. Although some say I resemble Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I still don't feel comfortable speaking on behalf of the entire black race, not even for all black Mennonites. I could probably more clearly articulate what it means to be Christian than what it means to be African-American.

What I do know is that at some point in my life, I learned that I had to speak for myself. Outside my faith, I decided to let no other banner define me. At times I vote and choose officials to represent me at various levels of government, but I understand that I must hold on to my personal values and beliefs, no matter what the popular media says. I can forgive and forget past hurts and pain even if a talking head tells me otherwise. I can even think about the images I see and the words I read and judge them for myself in spite of what others want me to think and believe. Again it is my faith and my relationship in Christ that serve as the basis for how I see the world and how I live my life.

Finally, just a bit advice to pastors, youth leaders and the shepherds of our church: Treat those who follow you as individual children of God. Ask them how they would like to be treated and what things they as individuals find offensive or what it will take to help them grow. You see, no single Hispanic, African, Asian, white or black person can speak for another. Even within a single race we are multifaceted, not monolithic, in thoughts and opinions. We are each uniquely created, and because of that we each have a unique voice. I pray that all members of Mennonite Church USA may find their voice and the opportunity to share it as part of their gift to the kingdom of God. TM

Jesus' way when everyone else is wrong

My family of origin and the community that shaped it taught me a false lesson and a true one. As a threat to burn Qurans draws intervention even from U.S. military leaders in the paradoxical position of leading the killing of many Muslims, as the discontent of many Americans with groups and views other than their own seems to rise by the day, what I learned from my family, both false and true, seems vital. And I'm reminded again that what we teach in families, that primal shaper of what we consider right and wrong, is crucial.

The false lesson was that only people like us were right. So I am not shocked that some people believe they are so right they should burn Qurans. Or others believe they are so right they should kill people who burn Qurans.

Seared in memory is the day I found in my dad's study the book purveying horrors supposedly perpetrated by the Roman Catholic Church. Then I did grasp why our family and community saw Catholics as doomed unless missionary efforts pulled them back from the brink.

I don't mean to be cruel to those who taught me these things. Many came to hold more generous understandings. Neither do I mean to ignore that even as seeing only people like us as right is wrong, alternatives are complicated. Because my family thought we were right, they taught me our way. Thus my we-are-right family is a primal source of the very passions that drive this column—the passions for Jesus, justice, doing unto others as I would have them do unto me, forgiving 70 times seven, loving enemies, seeing the log in my own eye, judging not.

I also have yet fully to solve the riddle of how any of us commit to values we hold dear without then judging others as beyond the pale of our rightness. I have needed, in personal and professional roles, to set boundaries. And a boundary typically distinguishes right from wrong.

But precisely because every effort to enact a boundary rushes us back toward only-we-are-right terrain, I also cherish what I see as the true lesson my family taught me: Sometimes to live out what we consider right is to sacrifice ourselves or convictions in trust that the power of Jesus, crucified then risen, likewise transforms our apparent defeat into a victory in God's kingdom. For me that teaching is encapsulated in what my missionary dad did when arrested and put in jail in Mexico for hitting a drunk, at-fault pedestrian. After long days a justice system that didn't presume innocence nevertheless concluded my dad was in the right. My dad should have thought lawsuit or at least nursed anger.

Instead he did two things. First, while he was in jail he befriended the other inmates. This was to convert them to Jesus. Although as an adolescent trending agnostic I wondered if true friends seek a relationship with another primarily to change them, I was moved by my dad's decision to treat prison not as curse but opportunity to love.

Second, he reached out to the man, left wounded but alive. They, too, became friends. My dad even helped pay some of his bills. My dad believed this was what Jesus wanted him to do.

I also want to do what Jesus tells me; that is my version of being right. But complicating things is my growing sense that how Jesus handles being right is different from how we do. Jesus' model and teachings, as in my dad's example, seem to tell me to spend my sense of rightness even for the sake of those I consider wrong. So I can't burn your Quran; I need to understand why you see it as blazing your trail. I follow Jesus less by showing how he and I are right and you wrong and more by loving you even when I think you're wrong—then praying you'll do the same for me, because what if only you are wrong when you are likewise so sure only I'm wrong? At the least, it would be nice if you loved me even amid your certainty that I'm wrong, if you did good to me whom you consider to be persecuting you.

What we teach in families is crucial.

I hope in my own family something like this is what my daughters have learned. I also hope they'll discern false and true lessons they've learned from me. And I hope that whatever our respective views of right and wrong, we'll trust that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 1:18), that "the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6) and that being right, as Jesus puts it, boils down to loving the Lord our God with all our minds and souls and hearts and our neighbors—not least, I suspect, those who are wrong—as ourselves (Luke 10:27). TM

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Witnessing for peace within an empire

Berry Friesen is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

A few recognized it long ago, soon after our government killed 140,000 residents of Hiroshima on an August morning in 1945 and then repeated the atrocity a few days later in Nagasaki. For most of us, it has taken longer to sink in. The United States of America aims to rule the world; we're an empire now.

Today, our nation has nearly 800 permanent military bases in over 100 countries of the world. Its troops have invaded and occupied a large swath of south central Asia. It spends as much annually on armaments as the rest of the world combined and has begun to fill outer space with military weapons. It bullies weaker nations with threats of war, lawless mercenaries and secret agents.

Since 9/11, this agenda has been supported by both major political parties, by the mainstream media and by many coworkers and neighbors. It has become the new status quo. However much we abhor war and desire peace, the worldview of empire is difficult to resist. What is our alternative? How will it keep us safe?

However much we abhor war and desire peace, the worldview of empire is difficult to resist.

Donald Rumsfeld, the former Secretary of Defense, had a penchant for telling the truth about empire. "We have two choices," he said. "Either we change the way we live, or we change the way they live. We choose the latter." Asked about the many casualties of this approach, Rumsfeld replied: "Freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things. ... Stuff happens."

Indeed. Over 1 million Iraqis have been killed since the empire invaded that country. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, it has become commonplace for innocent civilians to be gunned down by the empire's forces. In Iran, terrorists funded with our tax dollars bomb and maim.

This is what empires do. They seize control of resources, and as they do so they kill lots of innocent people and impoverish many more.

How can we prepare ourselves to articulate Jesus' way of peace as the alternative that will save the world?

1. Reclaim the biblical view of empire. Empires are never benign. They always are captivated by their own rhetoric, convinced of their own entitlement, addicted to their ability to inflict overwhelming violence.

John Stoner, a Mennonite who has been a pastor, teacher and lifelong peace activist, says this: "In the Bible's story, empires constitute the primary organized manifestation of that from which humanity must be saved."

2. Break the empire's spell. When we can no longer conceive of an alternative to the empire's way of managing the world, we become weak, and the empire's triumph is complete.

The first step in breaking the spell is to repent of our dependence on mainstream media for information about the world. For more liberal Mennonites, this repentance will bring a new skepticism of National Public Radio. For more conservative Mennonites, it will bring a new skepticism of Christian radio's news and commentary.

The second step is to acquaint ourselves with and begin talking about the bloody details of empire: its deception, greed and atrocities. Our inclination and training as Mennonites is to speak of peace in lofty religious and almost philosophic terms. But Jesus' message of peace loses its power when we separate it from the ugly realities from which we are being saved.

3. Embrace a theology of the public square. Two-kingdom theology has served us well by supporting an identity distinct from the one the empire offers. But it fails us when it leaves us in the privacy of our homes and congregations, grieving the violence of empire yet resigned to its sway.

Being "people of Christ's peace" is not a possession; it is a calling that sends us into the public square with the expectation that God's saving work awaits us there.

Empires do not end well; history tells us that. Living as we do as citizens in and beneficiaries of the current iteration, it is far from clear how God will save us. But it will entail public witness to the way of Jesus, of that we can be sure. We can join that witness confident it will not be in vain.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Newton office to sell part of building

MC USA office in Newton not closing; local church to buy part of the building

Mennonite Church USA staff members (from left) Shelley Buller, Terry Graber, Chris Graber and Robin Schrag in front of the office building in Newton, Kan.

Mennonite Church USA has signed an agreement to sell three of the four connected storefront buildings of the Newton, Kan., offices of Mennonite Church USA to RiverPoint Church, a local congregation. Plans are to reconfigure the space in the remaining building to accommodate the 35 current staff members who work there.

The 722 Main Street location is one of two national offices of Mennonite Church USA and previously served as the binational headquarters for the former General Conference Mennonite Church. One of the buildings in the process of being sold used to house the Faith & Life Bookstore.

"This is an answer to prayer," says Shelley Buller, executive assistant for Mennonite Church USA, noting the cost of maintaining the properties. She anticipates that the consolidation of space "will spark renewed energy among staff at the office." The current staff members are employees of Mennonite Church USA, Church Extension Services, Mennonite Women USA and *The Mennonite*.

While an inspection of the building is pending, and the sale will not be final until the Nov. 10 closing date, members of the Mennonite Office Executive Group (MOEG)—which oversees the Newton buildings' maintenance and staff needs—express excitement about the projected move.

"This felt right from the beginning," says Chris Graber, building manager.

Terry Graber, production director for Mennonite Publishing Network and a member of MOEG, says that when the group learned of Faith & Life Bookstore's plans to move to a different address last year, they thought the church should sell the property rather than try to rent it.

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board agreed, and Graber, who served as contact person in negotiations regarding the property, sought a buyer, but none came forward.

Then in late July, members of RiverPoint Church, an Evangelical Free Church congregation, expressed interest. The growing congregation of about 450 participants is renting space elsewhere in Newton.

As the two sides talked, the RiverPoint representatives surprised MOEG members when they offered to purchase the two adjoining buildings as well as the former bookstore location.

MOEG members realized that one building would have enough space for the current staff and more, and agreed that it would be good stewardship to sell that part of the facility and move the staff. Negotiations went smoothly, Graber says, and the two parties signed the contract Sept. 17, following approval by the Executive Board.

"I've never been in a business deal where both buyer and seller had worked so well together," Graber says, adding that both groups were looking forward to having each other as neighbors.

Brad Martin, RiverPoint's pastor, says that he has been encouraged by Mennonite Church USA's willingness to work with the church on the transaction.

Once the transaction is closed, Graber says, the plan is to have a staggered withdrawal from the buildings over a period of 30 to 90 days.

Some of the monies from the sale will be used to remodel the remaining building—including upgrading the entrance—and to reconfigure the existing space, which Graber said will require minimal structural changes.

Proceeds from the sale will not go toward construction of the new Mennonite Church USA building in Elkhart, Ind.

Other monies from the sale will likely go to Mennonite Church Canada because of an agreement made when the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) merged with the Mennonite Church (MC) in 2002 to form Mennonite Church USA. A Joint Executive Council agreed on a distribution formula of "60/40 for GC assets and 90/10 for MC assets," which reflected the proportion of U.S. to Canadian members in the two denominations at the time.

Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, says, "I'm grateful for the initiative the staff in Newton took to work this out. The sale and the move will save considerable maintenance cost, make more efficient use of the space and solidify the offices' place on Main Street." There are no plans to close the Newton office, he adds.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Native Mennonites call on church to listen

More than 200 Native Mennonites and allies meet in Ashland, Mont.

Mary Fontaine, a member of the Cree nation and Presbyterian minister from Richmond, British Columbia, called on the church to listen to indigenous voices at the Native Assembly in Ashland, Mont.

High in the majestic Montana mountains near the Great Divide, more than 200 Native Mennonites and their allies from across the United States and Canada gathered July 19-22.

Mary Fontaine, a member of the Cree nation and Presbyterian minister from Richmond, B.C., called on the church to listen to indigenous voices at the Native Assembly in Ashland, Mont.

The Native Assembly theme, "I am the potter, you are the clay," from Isaiah 45:9 and Jeremiah 18:6, encouraged all present at St. Labre Indian School, Ashland, to embrace God's vision of each person as a reflection of the image of God.

Fontaine said it is time for the church to listen to the indigenous voice. She tearfully recalled the discovery of her own voice while listening to elders singing in Cree for the first time.

"These were healing words of love and respect from Jesus," she said. "God has brought me back to my culture."

Experiencing sacred native history was an important part of this assembly as groups traveled to Deer Medicine Rocks and the Little Bighorn Battlefield

Deer Medicine Rocks, located on private land near Lame Deer, Mont., is a holy place for the Arapahoe, Cheyenne and Sioux nations. These rocks are covered with centuries-old petroglyphs that illustrate love of the Creator and all creation. A guide pointed out the glyph of the mirror, a primary sacred symbol. Some indigenous peoples believe gazing into the mirror is to see the image God in one's own reflection. The mirror also serves as a reminder to be faithful by keeping one's eyes on God.

At the Little Bighorn site, a Native American account of the battle has challenged many of the assumptions made by U.S. history textbooks describing the events of June 25, 1876, when George Custer and his U.S. cavalry were prevented from attacking a large peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux men, women and children. Today the bravery and ingenuity of the native people are recognized along with the acknowledgement that there were no winners in this tragedy.

A memorial stone tells the story well: "A'Kavehe' Onahe, Limber Bones, a Cheyenne warrior, fell here on June 25, 1876, while defending the Cheyenne way of life."

In his address to the assembly, Norman Meade, a Metis tribal elder and co-pastor of Manigotagan (Manitoba) Community Chapel, evoked the mirror symbol from Deer Medicine Rocks and the reference in Romans 9 to "the potter melding humans in order to make us useful rather than of no use."

"We have been taught long enough," Meade said. "We know where things have gone wrong. Our elders have told us, 'Don't take your eyes off the Lord.' Are we allowing God to mold us into useful vessels and use us for the Creator's work?"

Mary Fontaine spoke of the healing that is still needed.

"Don't let anger grow in your heart. That is what my grandfather and my mother, as well as the teachings of Jesus, told me when I would rage against all the indignities First Nations people have experienced. They said if we didn't let the anger go, it would take root, become bitterness and consume our lives," Fontaine said.

Fontaine, director of Hummingbird Ministries, which works toward reconciliation between aboriginal people and the church, said that in her studies at Vancouver (B.C.) School of Theology, she discovered what it meant to be both Cree and Christian.

"The potter was able to mold me through my people, my life experiences and my theological studies at VST. That [healing] knowledge is within us," Fontaine said.

Paula Killough, Mennonite Mission Network's senior executive for advancement, attended the assembly.

"Native and First Nations peoples are claiming the voice of healing as they open themselves to the Potter and the promise of new life," she said.—*Mennonite Mission Network staff*

MC Canada confronts Indian schools legacy

Although MC Canada not involved in schools, some members supported schools

Delegates to Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2010 struggled with just how to confess systemic complicity in the Indian Residential School (IRS) survivors issue while not admitting to being directly abusive in nonexistent Mennonite residential schools.

Of 139 residential schools identified by the Canadian government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as participants in the horrific legacy of residential schools, only one institution is generically associated with Mennonites. The now-closed Poplar Hill Development School located in northwestern Ontario was run by the Northern Gospel Light Mission (now Living Hope Ministries) in Red Lake, Ont.

A resolution first brought to the floor on July 1 passed, only to be questioned later by some delegates as not being far-reaching enough in working at reconciliation with survivors and acknowledging still-existing prejudices toward First Nation people. On July 2, the second draft was rescinded because it seemed to be contradictory by stating "exoneration of abuse" while still admitting complicity. In the end, the first resolution from the Christian Witness Council stands in its confession of the complicity of Mennonites "in the failing of the Christian church" and its role in the residential school system and acknowledging "that destructive individual attitudes, such as paternalism, racism and superiority are still present among us."

Neill von Gunten, who co-directs MC Canada Native Ministry with Edith, his wife, says that two other Ontario schools—Stirland and Cristal—were not included in the TRC process because they were defined as "day schools," thus excluding them from the Canadian government's criteria for inclusion on the TRC list. The von Guntens believe that the Timber Bay Home at Montreal Lake, Sask., was a residence for aboriginal students who attended a public school in the town. Some aboriginal parents, although not all, sent their children to Timber Lake voluntarily.

Neill says that neither MC Canada nor its predecessor, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, operated any residential schools. The only involvement in schools for aboriginals as a denomination occurred through Mennonite Pioneer Mission, the forerunner of Native Ministry. Through staff already in place in Pauingassi and Bloodvein, Man., MPM operated two day schools, both of which were established at the request of local community leaders.

Although MC Canada and its predecessor were not involved, the von Guntens say that over the years members of some MC Canada congregations volunteered or supported these schools. The extent and nature of this involvement is currently unknown, as is the existence of any additional, generic Mennonite connection.

However, Edith says, "In the eyes of the general public, 'a Mennonite is a Mennonite,' and there are no distinctions between geographical locations or denominational affiliation."—*Deborah Froese of Mennonite Church Canada with files from Canadian Mennonite editor/publisher Dick Benner. This article first appeared in the Aug. 23 issue of* Canadian Mennonite. *Used with permission.*

Everett J. Thomas

Fishbowl: During a Sept. 7-8 consultation on the role of a mission agency in a missional church, a people of color caucus talked while white participants listened. The consultation, held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., addressed a recommendation that Mennonite Mission Network's programs and staff become part of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. The group did not endorse the recommendation and asked for other options.—*Everett Thomas*

Voluntary vulnerability leads to growth

Mennonite churches in Colombia risk violence yet open doors to all.

Better a vulnerable seedling than a plant with stubborn roots. Such is the case in the Colombia Mennonite Church, whose members plant churches; in doing so often making themselves vulnerable—voluntarily.

The result of that vulnerability, according to mission worker Amanda Falla: "[The churches] spring up like flowers."

When the Fallas first arrived in Barranquilla, Colombia, serving through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness, they didn't waste any time building relationships for their first church plant.

In only three months, a church of 15 people regularly praised God with their instruments and offerings. During the next three years, the church blessed others to leave and begin two more churches.

In the past eight years, along the Caribbean coast of Colombia, five new churches have been planted through the leadership of the Fallas. There is also a Bible study group and several contacts that could grow into churches.

But church planting isn't easy. Sometimes it requires willingness for people to step outside their comfort zones.

Pastors Manuel Caicedo and María Elena Ruíz, who are mentored by the Fallas, chose to let God work through their vulnerability.

The married couple opened their home and church as a place of spiritual, emotional and physical renewal, although it meant becoming vulnerable to the suspicion of the community.

The ministry welcomes whoever walks in. Prostitutes, individuals with addictions and those in unhealthy homosexual relationships were among the first to do so.

This is the first ministry of its kind in the department of Cordoba in Colombia. In the beginning, it was not easy.

We wanted to try living by faith.—Manuel Caicedo

"We wanted to try living by faith," Caicedo says. Many of their neighbors and fellow church members were concerned with what the family was doing and what kind of people they were attracting.

With time, the neighbors grew to understand that becoming a Mennonite meant changing your lifestyle to serve others. Together with the church members, they saw the positive effects the church had on the lives of the renewed people.

From left, Manuel Caicedo and María Elena Ruiz stand with two of their children, Ismael and Moisés.

Their lives were different now; they reconnected with their families, became involved in the church and were accepted back into the community.

The Caicedos chose to live by faith and made themselves vulnerable because of their fervent call to "bring unity in the church and peace in the community," says Caicedo. As a result of the ministry of renewal, the church itself has been renewed. Members consider one another family—one that continues to expand.

Colombia hosts one of the world's largest populations of displaced people. Due to a war that has lasted nearly 60 years, an estimated 5 million men, women and children have fled from their homes. But Mennonite churches throughout Colombia are making themselves vulnerable to the violence by opening their doors to all.

Despite the potential danger it imposed on them, a few years ago the Fallas welcomed two families into their home.

"They asked us for help," says Gamaliel Falla. "What could we do?"

Now, the displaced families have made homes elsewhere in Colombia and in Canada.

The Fallas and Caicedos continue God's work in Colombia, and God continues to work through their voluntary vulnerability.

In Colombia's coastal region there are seven departments, five of which now have a Mennonite church presence. The Fallas hope that soon Mennonite churches will have a presence in each of the seven departments.—*Kelsey Shue for Mennonite Mission Network*

EMM responds to floods in India

Monsoon rains devastated areas that had historically never been under water.

"My village is completely under water and has been for the past two and a half months," says Victor Joseph, a pastor in the Sampurna Nagar area of the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. "All the crops have been lost. There is complete poverty in the entire village; whatever people have is now exhausted."

"Most have sold any animals they had, and almost all have purchased whatever they could buy on credit from the nearby towns," says "Joseph, a pastor in the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies network in India (also known as the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies). "People have no means of support. Children have no schools to attend. People are living in agony and feel forgotten."

Unprecedented monsoon rains in northern India, Nepal and Pakistan have caused severe flooding, landslides and widespread devastation of entire villages. While neighboring Pakistan has been in the news worldwide, India has not received as much attention.

FCA India, an Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) partner, has pastors, seven church planting stations and a Christian school in this area near the Indian border with Nepal.

"Over 1,000 families have lost everything in this flood," says P.C. Alexander, director of FCA India. "This is an area where there is very little access to basic education. Most people are illiterate. The average income is about $300 a year."

Alexander says the church was able to provide meager relief to this region in the past. Although the supplies they gave "were a drop in the bucket, it made a great impact on the villagers. Families have come to the Lord through the efforts of FCA India in the recent past."

An EMM staff member in the region says: "The situation is very similar to what is happening in Pakistan. The rivers that supply water to rural communities become the source of great tragedy. Thousands of people live in utter poverty and fear, not knowing when the rivers will flood and change course yet again, totally wiping away their villages."

Although India does experience heavy monsoon rains every year, this year it devastated areas that had historically never been under water. It has been described as the worst rains in the area in the last 80 years. India's Disaster Management Division says more than 2.6 million people in 16 districts have been affected by the flooding.

Over 1,000 families have lost everything in this flood.—P.C. Alexander

EMM has released $9,000 in emergency relief funds for flood relief in India. Alexander and the leadership of FCA India have set a goal to raise $50,000 to support at least 500 of these destitute families with food supplies and sanitary needs worth $100 per family.

"Many may hear the gospel for the first time as their survival needs are met through the relief efforts of our brothers and sisters in FCA India," P.C. Alexander says. "We have the opportunity to help those devastated by this flood and help advance the kingdom of God in Northern India.—*Linda Moffett of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Many villages in the Sampurna Nagar area in North India have been under water for more than two months.

P.C. Alexander, FCA India

Men on the Sharda River, which supplies water to rural communities: Many live in fear, not knowing when it will flood.

Garden boxes grow more than vegetables

Founder of organic container intiative watches project thrive in Juárez, Mexico.

Photo provided

A group of women who live on the former city dump of Juárez, Mexico, learn how to construct protective covers that shelter the box gardens from the harsh desert sun and wind.

Fifteen years ago, Lili and Pablo Gutierrez moved to the city of Juárez, Mexico, from south central Mexico in hopes of finding work and a better life.

Today, Pablo works in a maquilladora (assembly plant) in Juárez that makes automobile electrical parts; each week he puts in five 10-hour days and brings home about $30, which is all the family has to support themselves.

The Gutierrezes live on the former dump of this city of 1.5 million inhabitants. Their squatter-style home resembles those of most of their neighbors. While the ground they live on cannot support much vegetation—it's contaminated by the trash and chemicals that lie beneath the surface—the Gutierrezes have used their agricultural know-how to plant shrubs and trees to add some green to their surroundings.

And in their backyard, a four-foot-square wooden box of dirt flourishes with leafy greens, nutritious tomatoes and spicy jalapeño peppers, providing the Gutierrezes and their two daughters with fresh organic vegetables all year long.

Chuck O'Herron-Alex of Albuquerque, N.M., whose company—Veggiegrower Gardens of New Mexico—manufactures and supplies the self-contained gardens, says that since he started taking the boxes to Juárez seven years ago, 30 families like the Gutierrezes have begun growing their own organic produce.

"These families are now able to eat vegetables, whereas before, the cost of such 'luxuries' made them impossible to buy," says O'Herron-Alex, noting that the cost of groceries and other household supplies is not much different in Juárez than it is across the border in El Paso, Texas.

When O'Herron-Alex visited Juárez in late August, the families' gardens were bursting with fresh tomatoes, peppers and green beans. One of the women, Juanita Gomez*, said the gardens have become a family project.

O'Herron-Alex, who is a member of Albuquerque Mennonite Church, first went to Juárez after graduating from Duke Divinity School in 1993. He spent two years working for a house of hospitality in El Paso, Texas, that provides assistance to undocumented immigrants. He spent a year in El Paso and a year across the border in Juárez. In 1997, he began working for the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, leading groups to El Paso and Juárez for a border immersion experience.

After five years of making connections with the community on the former dump, he began to brainstorm ways of helping the people there grow their own food. He researched container gardening and came up with his own design for a self-contained garden. He brainstormed with Juárez community leaders, and in 2003 he took down his first garden box. Since then he has returned dozens of times.

On his trips, O'Herron-Alex teaches the families to construct the garden, put in the soil—a mix of high-quality potting soil and compost—fit the protective covering and plant the seeds. He regularly holds workshops on compost and organic pest control and introduces new crops that are not well known in Mexico.

"When I leave after planting a garden, it's basically a box of dirt," he says. "But I'm always overjoyed to go back and hear someone say, 'Carlos, come see my garden.' And what was a box of dirt a month or two ago is now a flourishing garden that they're eating out of."

Earlier this year, three of the women who have gardens and who work for the Centro Santa Catalina, a women's center in Juárez that serves about 400 women and children per week, called O'Herron-Alex and asked him to help start a community gardening project. In the last six months O'Herron-Alex—through the nonprofit organization he cofounded, called the Center for the Promotion of Peace—has installed five four-by-eight-foot gardens. He is currently trying to raise money for five more.

"In Juárez, it's hard for people to find work," O'Herron-Alex says. "If they do, it's often in a repetitive, demeaning, underpaid setting. I see the gardens giving people a sense of, This is something I can do. This is something of value and something I enjoy. The organic produce is great, but there are a lot of other benefits from the community gardens."

Participant Ruth Ramirez* says, "This garden project has helped us grow friendship, trust and community as well as vegetables."—*Andrew Clouse for Mennonite Church USA*

**Names changed to protect identity*

Finding Mennonite Church USA

'Recovering Evangelicals,' unchurched young adults, house church form congregations.

Keith Collins, pastor of Church of the Overcomer in Trainer, Pa., stands with Carolyn, his wife.

Three churches, among many, joined Mennonite Church USA conferences in the past several years. Each tells a special story.

A church in St. Paul, Minn., started as a group of "recovering Evangelicals"; a Philadelphia suburb church began to reach "unchurched" young adults, and a group of Mennonites in Kalamazoo, Mich., started an intimate house church.

Thirdway: Pastor Seth McCoy describes himself as a "recovering Evangelical and a newborn Mennonite," in the April issue of *Scattered Seeds*, the conference newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

McCoy serves as the pastor of Thirdway in St. Paul—a new church that joined Central Plains in June. Earlier in his life, when McCoy read materials by and about Mennonites and attended a Brethren church in his neighborhood, he began to long to be "not of this world" and question his faith that "never confronted the idols of the culture." So he moved his family to St. Paul's Midway neighborhood.

"Through my friendships with other recovering Evangelicals," he writes, "we started talking about how we could become a contrast community."

The congregation started about three years ago as a small group of people attending a local mega church, but this group found that they desired a deeper sense of accountability, McCoy says. The group continued to grow (now around 45 people), and in May 2009 they decided to start a church with hopes that it would join Mennonite Church USA—and it did.

Church of the Overcomer: Feel free to wear a T-shirt and jeans to pastor Keith Collins' church in Trainer, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia. His church has a "a blue jeans friendly ministry," he says. "Our philosophy is to reach the unchurched. Come as you are, but not 'anything goes.' "

Before planting Church of the Overcomer 10 years ago, Collins served on the staff of an African-American mega church for eight years but plateaued in that position.

"I wanted to do something where I had a greater individual impact on people's lives," he says.

He also wanted to work in a multicultural ministry, which Church of the Overcomer has with Anglo members, African-American members, as well as some immigrant members. Most are young adult and college students.

Collins says the best way to attract young people is through invitation by other young people. Also, Collins makes an effort to understand contemporary culture to better relate to young people.

Collins describes young people from traumatic home and foster care experiences who mature into young leaders involved in mentoring, ministry and more. Some have completed leadership programs at Mennonite seminaries.

The church owns four properties in Trainer, a refinery town of about 2,000 people. It runs a prison program and the "Academy of Champions," a cyber school, among many other programs—all without a paid staff and a budget of under $100,000 annually.

Church of the Overcomer joined Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference in 2004. Collins, a graduate of Geneva College, came to know Mennonite Church USA through one of his professors who was Mennonite.

Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship: Will Fitzgerald works for Microsoft on its Bing search engine as a senior software research developer—telecommuting to San Francisco and physically commuting one week a month.

However, on Sundays he leads and worships with Kalamazoo (Mich.) Mennonite Fellowship (www.kmenno.org)—a church that joined Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in July.

Since January 2007, this group of about 12 people, with no paid staff, has met in a home every Sunday morning.

"We meet in a home, which is the most obvious practice," Fitzgerald says. "This allows us an intimate setting for getting to know one another, active responsibility for one another and for worship, and great table fellowship."

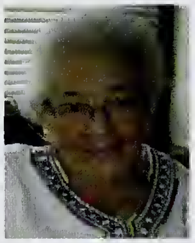
Despite the personal nature of the group, they sought affiliation with Indiana-Michigan. Three founding members, including Fitzgerald and his wife, were members at Pine Grove Mennonite Church in Battle Creek, Mich., at the time this group began to meet. Pine Grove, also a member of Indiana-Michigan, gave these members their blessing to meet on their own.

"It seemed natural to seek affiliation with Indiana-Michigan," he says. "We especially wanted to be mutually accountable with other congregations."—*Anna Groff*

Four women leave legacies

Former Mennonite mission workers die in August and September

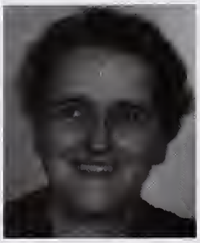
Although **Ramoth (Lowe) Burkhalter**, longtime mission worker in India, passed away on Aug. 14 at the age of 86, God isn't finished with her work.



Burkhalter and her husband, Edward, served as mission workers in India for 42 years with Commission on Overseas Mission, a predecessor agency to Mennonite Mission Network. During that time, Burkhalter's heart went out to the young women in the area. She wanted to offer women life skills and a dignified way to make a living, so she founded ASHA (hope) Handicrafts, an internationally recognized fair-trade business. There young women learned sewing and embroidery, skills that would enable them to gain independence.

She was born on Nov. 7, 1923, in Asheville, N.C., to Oscar and Mary Knox Lowe.—*Kelsey Shue, adapted from obituary written by Sheryl Burkhalter*

Nancy Rebekah (Hernley) Conrad, former Mennonite Board of Missions worker, died Aug. 28 in Goshen, Ind. She was 91. Born March 18, 1919, in Scottdale, Pa., Nancy was the daughter of Henry and Daisy (Cutrell) Hernley. As World War II wound down in Europe and the Pacific, Conrad traveled on a troop ship to a United Nations refugee camp near Alexandria, Egypt. There she ministered to the medical needs of Yugoslavian women and children. Later, she worked in a similar camp with Greek women in Gaza, Palestine. Nancy was given the nickname Sunshine by those she worked with.



In 1945, Nancy transferred to Nazareth, Ethiopia, where in January 1946 she married Paul L. Conrad of Canby, Ore. The Conrads helped found the first hospital in the Nazareth area. From 1951 to 1967, Nancy and Paul Conrad served in Dhamtari, India, with Mennonite Board of Missions, a precursor organization to Mennonite Mission Network. After the Conrad family returned to the United States in 1967, Conrad received a bachelor of science degree in nursing (1977) and a master of science degree in nursing (1979) from the University of Pittsburgh. For 10 years she had a private practice as a mental health nurse clinician and served on the board of Mennonite Mutual Aid.—*DeVonna R. Allison, adapted from information provided by the Conrad family*

Sophie L. (Schmidt) Brown, a lifelong teacher who served 40 years as a mission worker in Taiwan, died Sept. 4 at her home in North Newton, Kan. She was 86.

Brown was born April 19, 1924, in Goessel, Kan., to Simon F. and Margaret (Unruh) Schmidt. She graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and later continued her education at Arizona State University and Wichita (Kan.) State University, specializing in counseling and special education.

In 1948, Schmidt married Roland P. Brown, and in the early 1950s the couple traveled to Taiwan with the Commission on Overseas Mission. For the next 40 years the Browns helped develop the ministries of the Mennonite Christian Hospital in the city of Hualien. Brown found time to counsel unwed mothers and was instrumental in starting the Hualien Christian School. She also worked for nearly 10 years at the New Dawn Developmental Center in Hualien.

Roland and Sophie Brown retired from mission service and returned to the United States in 1990. After a long and rewarding career overseas, Sophie Brown looked forward to spending more time with her family and friends. She and her husband returned to Taiwan for one last mission term, from 1993 to 1995.—*DeVonna R. Allison*

Marie Hershey (Leaman) Shenk, 72, a seven-year Mennonite Board of Missions worker in Israel and Palestine, died Sept. 7 at her home at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community-Park Gables in Harrisonburg, Va.

Shenk was born May 25, 1938, to Daniel and Elizabeth (Hershey) Leaman, in Lancaster, Pa. On Aug. 30, 1958, she married Calvin E. Shenk. Together they raised three children. In 1994, Marie and Calvin Shenk began a joint assignment in Israel and Palestine under Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee. For the next seven years, until 2001, the couple lived six months of every year in Jerusalem, returning for the remaining six months to Harrisonburg, where Calvin taught at Eastern Mennonite University.

It was during this time that Marie studied for her master of arts degree in religion. Her thesis was entitled, "Mennonite Encounter with Judaism in Israel, 1953-1993."—*Mennonite Mission Network*

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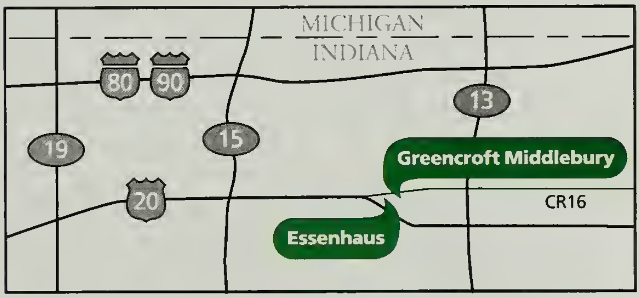

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Mennonite radio station exceeds goals

Shaping Families airs on 17 stations with 100,000 to 300,000 weekly listeners.

Wayne Gehman

Melodie Davis, left, producer for Shaping Families, and Burton Buller, host, record narration for an edition of the 15-minute weekly radio program.

A year ago, staff at Third Way Media were feverishly working to produce the first programs for the Shaping Families program, which launched Jan. 4.

Last fall, no stations were in line yet to air the program, no sponsors had signed on, there was no website, and no webmaster was on staff to create one.

Third Way Media staff had discussed the possibility for years (beginning in 2005), with individuals, churches and radio stations. They were partially inspired by a significant donation earmarked for "family programming," which helped fund research and development of pilot programs. Through this research, a number of religious stations expressed strong interest in such a program.

However, until stations or sponsors signed on dotted lines, the questions loomed large, chief among them: If the Mennonite church again produced an ongoing regular radio program, (after a lapse of about 23 years) will they (listeners) come?

As of late August, Shaping Families is airing on 17 stations across the United States, exceeding initial goals set by staff of 10 stations by the end of 2010. When the Mennonite Hour program launched in 1952, it was on two stations by the end of its first year.

"A reasonable estimate of 100,000 to 300,000 listeners may hear the program on a weekly basis," says Sheri Hartzler, program manager and acting interim co-director.

But the biggest need was sponsors. Third Way Media applied for a startup grant including money for air time from their longtime TV production grant source, Odyssey Networks, for $43,000. Of that, $25,000 was allotted to go toward airtime the first year.

Staff have been working to arrange partnerships for local Mennonite churches, businesses, groups of churches and schools or agencies to take over costs of airtime. Since January, Mennonite businesses, churches and organizations have become sponsors.

- Ed Roth, registered principal and branch manager for Raymond James Financial Services in Pettisville, Ohio, sponsors the program on WPOS in Holland, Ohio. His office is the sole sponsor of the 8:15 p.m. program on Saturdays.
- In Lewistown, Pa., four churches—Allensville, Barrville, Locust Grove and Maple Grove Mennonite—sponsor a release on Sundays at 9 a.m. on WMRF. They rotate sponsor tags.
- Lavina Miller with SpringHaven Counseling Center Rittman, Ohio, sponsors Shaping Families on WKLM in Millersburg, Ohio. They recently expanded their counseling network and added new locations and were eager for the exposure such sponsorship would provide.
- Dave Eshleman, owner of WBTX in Broadway, Va., has a nonprofit arm, SONshine Ministries, through which it raises funds to provide airtime for a variety of religious programs, including Shaping Families.
- Shaping Families is broadcast on WDAC station sponsored by Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School and Philhaven.

And what about listeners? "We had our first request recently from a listener who asked for prayer for dealing with a granddaughter who was not being allowed contact with her grandmother," says Hartzler. Another woman asked for help locating a Mennonite church or counselor for her drug-addicted adult child. One listener, Mary, wrote on the program's Facebook page: "I listened to your program last Saturday night, and a lady was talking about her husband committing suicide. I have had a lot of problems myself with depression and suicidal tendencies, so the program really caught my attention."

Elaine Kauffman from First Mennonite Church of Mountain Lake, Minn., wrote in an e-mail: "A woman from another congregation stopped me on the street yesterday afternoon to say she had heard the program. The first one she heard was Aug. 15, which included testimonials about volunteering at the International Guest House, and that is something she would like to do some day [through SOOP]. She said she had to stop what she was doing and listen."

Shaping Families is produced by Third Way Media as a department of Mennonite Mission Network.—*Melodie Davis of Third Way Media*

Agroecology model 'actually works'

Students visit three farms: 1,000-cow dairy, grass-fed meat and organic.

Anthony Imhoff and Lisle Bertsche show a green bean harvest during Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen (Ind.) College's Agroecology Summer Intensive this year. They are environmental science majors from Goshen College and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., respectively.

If there is a common thread among the seven students from five colleges who studied in Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen (Ind.) College's Agroecology Summer Intensive this year, it is one of new possibilities.

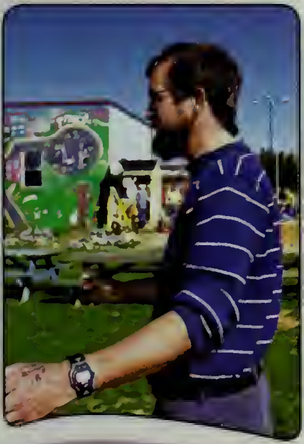
"Now I know that there are ways to survive as a small farmer," says Emma Regier, a biology major at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

"This is an exciting time to study sustainable agriculture," says Dale Hess, director of the program. "There are indications that the Obama administration has recognized the connections between the way we grow food and eat, and the health-care crisis on the one hand and the climate-change and energy crisis on the other."

Students study four courses during the nine-week agroecology intensive: Soils, Vegetable Crops, Agroecology and Small Farm Management. Politics, economics and environmental justice are all part of the web of connections that students delve into. The students also live together on site and share a kitchen.

During the nine-week program, students encounter a wide range of alternatives to industrial agriculture. The group visited a conventional 1,000-cow dairy farm, a grass-fed meat farm with its own kill floor and an organic Amish farm, among others. They also had the chance to plow with oxen at Tillers International, a farm that preserves and studies low-capital technologies, and to meet a couple who just began their own Community Supported Agriculture two years ago.

"I was really excited when we were asked to design a business plan," says Angela Herrmann, a student from Indianapolis. "Mine described scattered-site community gardens created on brown fields. When I put the idea down on paper, it looked like a model that could actually work."*—Jennifer Schrock of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center*



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New generation of planners feels freedom

End of GC-MC ratio requires new trust in convention planning.

When the former General Conference (GC) Mennonite Church and the former Mennonite Church (MC) held their premerger, joint convention at Wichita (Kan.) '95, Rachel Swartzendruber Miller was a teenager.

Today, she is director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, which was formed when those churches merged in 2002. During planning for the past several conventions, including Pittsburgh 2011—Mennonite Church USA biennial convention—she has seen how time can blur old distinctions, while not entirely erasing them.

She and other Mennonite Church USA leaders who grew up in the 1990s feel freer to shape conventions around the future of the merged church, even as they are reminded of the MC-GC histories and tensions that fired the forging of transformation.

"According to the Mennonite Church USA bylaws, we are directed to choose convention worship planning committees based on certain ratios," Miller says. Those ratios include 50/50 women to men, 20/80 racial/ethnic people to Anglo/European and 40/60 former GC to MC backgrounds.

"But it's getting harder and harder when selecting planning committees to even tell who was GC and who was MC," she says. Given the natural evolution of the merger, Miller is glad the 40/60 GC to MC mandate for convention planning appointees ends in 2011.

"We want to choose people for the gifts they bring to the table, rather than using premerger paradigms that divide us," she says. "In doing that sensitively, I believe God's Spirit would have us trust that at the end of the day, the two traditions will be equally represented."

Glen Guyton, associate executive director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA, also feels that former GC-MC distinctions are fading. And they have never held as much value among racial/ethnic groups and congregations, who often have been occupied with other priorities.

"The racial/ethnic groups have tended to be more regional, even binational, in focus," Guyton says. "For example, the many Asian groups include members from Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Often, the MC-GC divisions don't apply. If you are an Asian immigrant who comes to America but still feels ties to your native land, the geographical borders—let alone the former denominational boundaries—won't mean as much to you."

Ervin Stutzman, executive director for Mennonite Church USA, agrees that this new season calls for new trust and openness. Yet the church should not expect itself to erase those distinctions entirely, he says. "These distinctions keep us aware of the social—and organizational—realities that have shaped us to be who we are," he says. "For example, GCs as a general rule had more relational connections to Canadian Mennonites, and that is a rich legacy."

Youth worship planning committee members display the Pittsburgh 2011 convention poster. Front, from left: Marisa Alemán-Cantú, Glen Guyton. Back, from left: Andrew Gordon, Shelly Miller, Grace Pam, M. Jeremy Ours and Shé Hall.

Stutzman, who served as moderator of the emerging Mennonite Church USA from 2001 to 2003, is now at the helm of the merged church.

"It's certainly true that MC-GC distinctions aren't important among our youth, who were not involved in matters pertinent to area conferences in the former churches," he says. "The younger a person is, the more likely it is that he or she will not be concerned with these issues.

"But it's equally true that some constituents will think about these things for years to come, and that doesn't have to be a bad thing. These distinctions will always matter on some level, because they keep us mindful of the positive formation of history," he says.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson*

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS Pittsburgh 2011 will be held July 4-9, 2011, in downtown Pittsburgh. The theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers. The theme is twofold: first, as instruments of Christ's reconciliation, we have many "bridges to cross." Second, God calls us to be ambassadors for Christ and to serve as "bridges to the cross."

RESOURCES

New Perspectives in Believers Church Ecclesiology, edited by Abe Dueck, Helmut Harder and Karl Koop (CMU Press, 2010, $29.50), addresses how the Believers Church family (made up of Baptists, Brethren, Churches of Christ, Churches of God, Mennonites, Pentecostals and others) remain accountable to the gospel amid competing forces of globalization and localization.

Diary of a Kidnapped Colombian Governor: A Journey Toward Nonviolent Transformation by Guillermo Gaviria Correa, edited by James F.S. Amstutz, translated by Hugo and Norma Zorrilla (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $17.95), is an English translation of Correa's diary while in captivity. He died during a failed rescue attempt on May 5, 2003.

Peace Be with You: Christ's Benediction Amid Violent Empires edited by Sharon L. Baker and Michael Hardin (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $23.95), addresses such questions as, Is it the church's role to sustain cultures and empires? Can the church both stand for justice and continue in the way of peace?

Consistently Pro-Life: The Ethics of Bloodshed in Ancient Christianity by Rob Arner (Pickwick Publications, 2010, $17) takes up the question of when and under what circumstances is it morally justifiable for a Christian to take human life. Arner argues that the deliberate killing of any human being is incompatible with the moral life of a follower of Jesus.

Baptizing Harry Potter: A Christian Reading of J.K. Rowling by Luke Bell (Paulist Press, 2010, $16) traces the intricate pattern of Rowling's mystical tale, brings out the wisdom of her understanding of good and evil and links her magical world, shown to be a rich mine of spiritual and Christian teaching, to spiritual reality.

Prophetically Incorrect: A Christian Introduction to Media Criticism by Robert H. Woods Jr. and Paul D. Patton (Brazos Press, 2010, $19.99) argues that we must understand the priestly role of media before focusing on the prophetic. Media confirm everyday cultural assumptions and help propagandize political and religious establishments on both the right and the left.

Death and Taxes (National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, 2010, $10-$20, on a sliding scale) is a 30-minute DVD in which 28 people offer their motivations for and methods of resisting the war machine with their tax money. The film introduces viewers to war tax refusal and redirecting tax dollars to peace. It is presented in five sections: Becoming a War Tax Resister, Methods of Resistance, Redirecting Taxes, Risks and Consequences, and Goals and Choices.

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MWC in 'good shape' as it faces changes

Next meeting will include decision of 2015 assembly site, next general secretary

"Mennonite World Conference is in good shape. There are no crisis areas. What we agreed to do we have been able to do."

With those words, Larry Miller, general secretary, summarized the work of MWC to the Executive Committee (EC) when it gathered July 28-Aug. 4 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for its annual meeting.

Most of the members of this EC were new, having been elected by the MWC General Council in 2009 in Asunción, Paraguay. Charged with overseeing the work of MWC between the triennial sessions of the MWC General Council, the new EC first spent time becoming acquainted with the structure and work of the organization they oversee.

But they soon became involved in discussion of significant areas for MWC's ongoing work.

One was the frequency of MWC assemblies and the site for the next assembly. After careful study and serious consideration of alternatives, the EC acted to reconfirm the six-year cycle for these gatherings. After lengthy deliberation, they also agreed to hold the next assembly in 2015 either in the United States or in Indonesia.

"But MWC is much more than assemblies," Miller told the group. EC members soon learned that as they reviewed the work of four commissions new to the MWC structure.

Finalized in 2009, the four commissions—Faith and Life, Peace, Deacons and Mission—each reported to the EC they have begun their work electronically and in person. All have plans for future work:

- Faith and Life Commission is anticipating surveying member churches on practices related to baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- Peace Commission has plans for a study of peace practices in Anabaptist-related churches globally;
- Deacons Commission has identified two or more Global Anabaptist Deacons in each continent to be available especially in times of crisis;
- Mission Commission announced plans to hold a Global Mission Fellowship in 2013 somewhere in Asia.

Commissions are not the only changes for MWC. The Executive Committee heard a report from a search committee charged with finding a new general secretary, who will replace Miller when he leaves the position in 2012 after 22 years of service in that role. The committee will have the name of a replacement to consider when they meet next in May 2011.

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A previous EC, working from 2003 to 2009, set in motion plans to move toward MWC representation and offices located in each continental region.

While MWC is currently in good financial shape, it is not yet in a position to simultaneously establish representation and offices on each continent, Bergen told the committee. So this plan is being listed in MWC's financial projections as an "opportunity," along with several other things that MWC will do as funds become available.

Income for current operations is meeting expenses, Karen Martin-Schiedel, director of finance and administration, said. But because of additional costs due to changes facing MWC, an Unrestricted Fund budget of $897,000 for 2011, passed by the EC, calls for $150,000 to come from reserves designated for the transition period.

MWC has built modest reserves over the past several years primarily because of individual contributions to a Leadership Campaign designed to financially facilitate the leadership transition over the next several years and because of a surplus from Assembly 15 in 2009.

"I would like to see MWC use the same strategies in other continents as in North America," said Pakisa Tshmika, MWC global church advocate. "We need to push Africans, Asians and Latin Americans to also do their part."

Janet Plenert, MWC vice president, cited the example of the Paraguayans and their support of Assembly 15, which was a major factor making possible a surplus of $325,000 from that event.

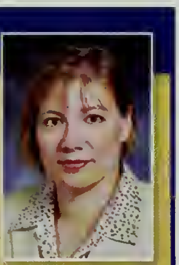
Executive Committee members welcomed the plans for the network, which will be incorporated into MWC's structure and budgeting. The group comes with an $85,000 surplus from the Global Youth Summit held in Paraguay in connection with Assembly 15.

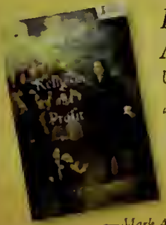
The EC also heard about MWC's involvement in accompanying conflict among member churches.

Out of these and other concerns, there was agreement to work further on what is being labeled as a "healing of memories" project, dealing with such themes as the legacy of slavery and colonialism, leadership and power transitions in the context of violence, the use of money and power in relationships among Anabaptists within and between cultures.

The EC also learned that by June, MWC member churches totaled nearly 1.2 million baptized members, an increase of 30,000 over the previous year.

The next meeting of the MWC Executive Committee will be in early May 2011 in Hong Kong. A final decision is expected there on the site of the 2015 assembly and on the person to be recommended to the General Council for appointment by mail vote as MWC's next general secretary.—*J. Lorne Peachey for Mennonite World Conference*





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CPT report challenges U.S. reading of Iraq

Report based on interviews with Iraqi citizens in various parts of the country

The future of Iraq is more complex and uncertain than the current U.S. narrative claims, according to a report just published by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in Iraq. The report quotes Iraqis who express doubt on the effects of the U.S. military "surge," the trustworthiness of the Iraqi military and the reliability of Iraqi public figures and institutions. Find the report online at www.cpt.org/files/CPT_Report_Iraq_after_Occupation.pdf.

"Iraqis in this report challenge the simplistic success story that the U.S. is telling about Iraq," says CPT worker Marius van Hoogstraten.

The report, entitled "Iraq after the Occupation—Iraqis Speak About the State of Their Country as the U.S. Military Withdraws," is based on extensive interviews with Iraqi citizens in various parts of the country. It recommends that the United States "think creatively" about ways to support Iraqi society before the U.S. military withdraws entirely at the end of 2011.

The United States, which invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003, recently announced an "end of combat missions," in preparation for a complete withdrawal from the country by the end of 2011. The report notes that no consensus exists among Iraqis on the future of their country, with some interviewees expecting the security situation to get much worse, while others are more optimistic. However, none expects Iraq to be independent after a complete U.S. withdrawal.

"I do not think the American army came all this way, spent all this money to leave [Iraq] a prey to others," one Baghdad resident said in an interview.

Although the report confirms an improved security situation over the last few years, it questions the contribution of the "surge." About half of those interviewed pointed instead to the U.S. withdrawal from Iraqi cities in 2009 as the major contributor to the improved security situation.

In its conclusion, CPT Iraq stipulates that in the waning days of U.S. military presence in Iraq, the United States should focus on the Iraqi economy, reconciliation efforts and a culture of accountability in the Iraqi security forces.

CPT stresses that the United States must also respect Iraqi democratic sovereignty.—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

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CALENDAR

Dutch Mennonites will commemorate several important historical events in 2011: 450 years ago Menno Simons passed away (1561); 275 years ago the Mennonite Seminary in Amsterdam was founded (1735); 200 years ago the Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit (ADS), the conference of all Dutch Mennonite congregations came into being (1811); In 1911 the first female, academically trained pastor, Anne Zernike started her ministry in Bovenknijpe, Friesland. The schedule of events can be found at the website of the Mennonite Church in the Netherlands: www.doopsgezind.nl > jubilea 2011 > activiteiten. Or contact Henk Stenvers, secretary of the ADS: h.w.stenvers@ads.nl or 003120-6230914.

Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind., will be celebrating its ***50th anniversary*** on Oct. 16 and 17, 2010. Several events are scheduled over the two days of the "Deep-Rooted Faith" celebration, including a message from Dan Miller, lead minister for Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, at the 9:30 a.m. service Sunday, Oct. 17. To see the full schedule of events or to register, go to www.krmc.net or call Phyllis Miller at 574-291-0924.

WORKERS

Driediger, Penny, was licensed at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va., on July 25 for chaplaincy ministry in the role of Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va.

Guzman, Brian, was licensed as lead pastor at Prince of Peace Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., on July 25.

Heimbach, Albert, retired as lead pastor at Susquehanna Mennonite Church, Port Trevorton, Pa., on July 25.

Sauder, Drew, was licensed as deacon at Goodville Mennonite Church, Goodville, Pa., on June 6.

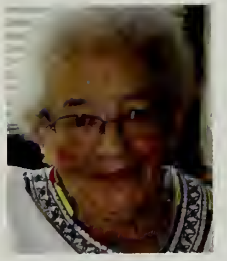
Thomas, Melvin, ended a term as intentional interim lead pastor at Chestnut Hill Mennonite Church, Columbia, Pa., on July 31.

DEATHS

Amstutz, Myron Jay, 82, Kidron, Ohio, died Aug. 24 of pulmonary fibrosis. Spouse: Gladys Lehman Amstutz. Parents: Albert and Della Gerber Amstutz. Children: Jane Miller, Merle, Louise Hernley, Deb Miller, Julie Amstutz; 13 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Living Water Community Church, Dalton, Ohio.

Boehr, Laura Friesen, 88, Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 19. Spouse: Donald Boehr (deceased). Parents: Peter D. and Katharina Friesen. Children: Stanley, Vivian Pereboom, Stuart, Laura Jane Steingard, Doris Miller, Dr. Brenda Srof; 15 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Brooks, Allen D., 72, Elkhart, Ind., died July 27 of a pulmonary embolism. Spouse: Sharon K. Nunemaker Brooks. Parents: Harold and Mae Heistand Brooks. Children: David, Cheryl Wise, Michael; four grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.



Burkhalter, Ramoth Lowe. The family celebrates the life of Ramoth Lowe Burkhalter who passed away, surrounded by her family, on Aug. 14th at the age of 86. Ramoth Isabel Lowe Burkhalter was born on Nov. 7, 1923 in Asheville, N.C., the daughter of Oscar and Mary Knox Lowe. With her brothers Reid, James and Oscar Jr., she completed her schooling in Asheville. Following her graduation from Lee Edwards High School, she completed two years of business administration at a junior college in Asheville, followed by two years at Wheaton College, in Wheaton, Illinois where she met Edward Burkhalter of Berne, Indiana. They were married on Aug. 29, 1945 in Asheville. Together they continued their studies for an additional year at Wheaton, where she completed a master's degree in Christian education. They then moved to New York City where Edward received his master's of divinity from New York Biblical Seminary and Ramoth developed her deep love of education while teaching kindergarten. In Nov. 1947, the couple and four month old daughter, Mary Kay, left the United States for India where they spent forty-two years. Five more children were born in India. All six completed their education at Woodstock School in the Himalayan foothills, where Ramoth was active in the hillside community. They served in central India as Mennonite missionaries with Indian churches and communities in Korba, Saraipali, and Jagdeeshpur. During her years of service, Ramoth sought to create opportunities for young leaders through informal and formal education, as well as offering dignity and life skills to young women through ASHA, ('hope') a sewing project she helped to found. In 1989, the couple re-

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

tired to Berne, where they found avenues for ministry and supportive bonds. Following Edward's death in 1993, she continued to live in Berne until she moved to Minneapolis, Minn. in 2007 to be near her family, where she found a home at Bethany Covenant Village. As a wise counselor, she crossed boundaries, befriending and drawing others into community. She is survived by her six children and their families: Mary Kay (Jonathan) Larson of Atlanta, Ga.; Beth Ann (George) Taylor of Bridgewater, Va.; John (Barbara) Burkhalter of Indianapolis; Joyce (Mike) Flueckiger of Atlanta, Ga.; Amy (Chris Bauer) Burkhalter of Minneapolis, Minn.; and Sheryl (Vivek Gupta) Burkhalter of Chicago, Ill. She is also survived by her brother, Oscar Lowe Jr. of Strawberry, Ariz. She will be greatly missed by her children, her brother, her nieces, her 10 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be made to a scholarship fund for the training of women leaders in the Indian church or to a fund in support of South Asian immigrant women in America. The respective organizations are: the Mennonite Mission Network, c/o First Mennonite Church of Berne; or, Raksha (meaning "protection" in Hindi), at raksha.org.

Deputy, Norma Virginia Shank, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 2. Spouse: John Jacob Deputy (deceased). Parents: Dan G. and Irene Heatwole Shank. Children: Betty Holder, Lois Huffman; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Crestwood of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Freyenberger, Irene Good, 83, Kouts, Ind., died Aug. 22. Spouse: Edward Freyenberger (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Anna Martin Good. Children: Cheryl Nix, Beverly Moyer, Keith, Douglas, Todd, David; 17 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Freyenberger, Janice Carolyn Roth, 77, Wayland, Iowa, died Aug. 12. Spouse: Joe Freyenberger. Parents: Joseph Nicholas and Sarah Short Roth. Children: Barbara Freyenberger, Michelle Frederick, Carmen Martinez, Maria Roth; eight grandchildren; one great-granddaughter. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Gahman, M. Earl, 77, Telford, Pa., died Sept. 6. Spouse: Doris N. Moyer Gahman. Parents: Melvin H. and Hannah L. Detweiler Gahman. Children: Deborah L. Johnston, Sharon K. Moyer; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Rockhill Mennonite Church, Telford.

Geiser, Elmer S., 88, Dalton, Ohio, died Aug. 10 of cancer. Spouse: Agnes Irene Amstutz Geiser (deceased). Parents: John and Helena Gerber Geiser. Children: Karen Mishler, Arlene Frazier, Marceil, Olin; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 14 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Harnish, A. Thomas, 79, Quarryville, Pa., died Aug. 8. Spouse: Joanne Haverstick Harnish. Parents: Clayton C. and Elizabeth Thomas Harnish. Children: June L. Minnich, John L., Joy L. Schoenhals; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 13 at Willow Street Mennonite Church, Willow Street, Pa.

Helmuth, Menno, 88, Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 19. Spouse: Dorothy E. Kreider Helmuth. Parents: Chris I. and Mary Miller Helmuth. Funeral: Aug. 22 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Hickey, Claire E. Tammany, 75, Lancaster, Pa., died May 26. Spouse: John Hickey (deceased). Parents: Harry and Martha Tammany. Children: Claire "Sue" McMichael, Dinah Wise, John, Jr., Roseanne Keller, Christopher, Michael; 11 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Hooley, LaVern, 87, Shipsehwana, Inc died Aug. 31. Spouse: Lois Lambright Hc ley. Parents: Noah J. and Sovilla Blough Holley. Children: Beverly Hooley, Phil, Byron; five grandchildren; six great-grar children. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Hoover, Lester Martin, 89, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 22 of renal failure. Spouse: An Esbenshade Siegrist Hoover. Spouse: Ler M. Weaver Hoover (deceased). Children: Ruth Hoover Seitz, Esther H. Bucher, Sharon W. Hoover Bucher, Jay W.; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at Landis Valley Christi Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa.

Kehler, Jacob K., 87, Altona, Manitoba died Aug. 29. Spouse: Margaret Kehler. Parents: Jacob J. and Helena Klippenstei Kehler. Children Betty, Verna, Linda, Rose and Gloria Kroeker; 10 grandchildren; tw great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 2 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Knudson, Jacqueline J. Lane, 72, South Bend, Ind., died July 31. Spouse: Theodore Knudson. Parents: Lawrence C. and Dorothy F. Lee Lane. Children: Todd, Kari Kippen, Janet Ritchie, Lori Alderfer; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchil dren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Kulp, Dorothy Stear, 93, Sellersville, Pa., died Aug. 10. Spouse: Walter Kulp (de ceased). Parents: Elmer K. and Clara Mye Stear. Children: Scott, Carol Kulp Gosart; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchi dren. Funeral: Aug. 14 at Rockhill Menno ite Community Chapel, Sellersville.

Linder, Elsie M. Rohrer, 90, Louisville, Ohio, died Aug. 12. Spouse: Leonard Lind (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Maggie Kurtz Rohrer. Children: Barbara Engelhard Brenda Smith; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 16 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Marner, Jason Jay, 22, Brighton, Iowa, died July 1 in a motorcycle accident. Parents: Stan and Joan Roth Marner. Siblings: David, Christopher. Funeral: July 7 at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa.

Mix, Mike, 64, Wauseon, Ohio, died July 24. Parents: Ralph and Irma Mix. Funeral: July 20 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Moyer, Kathryn D. Leatherman, 90, Souderton, Pa., died July 30. Spouse: Harold L. Moyer (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Bessie Detweiler Leatherman. Children: Dale, Carl, Glen, Lynette Martin, Lois Hackman, Nancy Delp; 17 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Souderton Mennonite Home.

Ritter, James Allen, 50, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Deborah L. Ritter. Parents: Clayton and Elsie Ritter Witmer. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Dorothy M. Unruh, 94, Newton, Kan., died Sept. 3. Spouse: Reinhold F. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Harrison and Anna Schroeder Unruh. Children: Betta Kym, Deanna Entz, Randall, Ralph; 12 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Senner, Alvina Hieb, 98, Freeman, S.D., died Aug. 28. Spouse: Eldon P. Senner. Parents: Stephan and Magdalena Senner. Children: Doris Tieszen, Joan Preheim, Patricia Huffaker, Eldon; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 2 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Shenk, Marie Leaman, 72, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 7 of cancer. Spouse: Calvin Shenk. Parents: Daniel and Elizabeth Leaman. Children: Douglas, Duane, Donna Shenk; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Shenk, Stanley C., 91, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 2. Spouse: Doris Sell Shenk (deceased). Parents: Coffman and Icie Pearl Shank Shenk. Stepmother: Retta Boyer Shenk. Children: Dave, Dan, Rhoda Keener, Phil; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 6 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Shoemaker, Ila June Litwiller, 83, Dakota, Ill., and Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 23 from the effects of pulmonary fibrosis. Spouse: Donald Shoemaker. Parents: Albert and Verna Conrad Litwiller. Children: Larry, Joyce Yoder, Sandra Friesen, Nelda Wittig; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Steiner, Levi A., 99, Apple Creek, Ohio, died July 18. Spouse: Orpha A. Geiser Steiner (deceased). Parents: Aaron J. and Sarah J. Amstutz Steiner. Children: Lois Holdsclaw, Margaret Himes, Palmer, Ethel Hoffman, Kathleen Ramer; 18 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 21 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Summer, Marjorie Stalter, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Milton G. Summer (deceased). Parents: Daniel D. and Alice Miller Stalter. Children: Shelby Morrisey, Adris King, Sharon Axline; seven grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; nine great-step-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Wyse, Richard, 80, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 24. Spouse: Grace Prough Wyse. Parents: Leland and Ilva King Wyse. Children: Patrick, Rhonda McGraw, Beth Wall, Becky Rupp; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Yoder, Perry E., 71, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 1. Spouse: Gail Peak Yoder. Parents: Ervin J. and Barbara Ann Eash Yoder. Children: Allen W., Holly Yoder. Funeral: Sept. 13 at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen.

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Bluffton University invites applications for a ***full-time, three-year (with possibility for continuation), non-tenure-track program development position in public health beginning*** Fall 2011. Qualifications: PhD, ABD or international equivalent; experience in public health; evidence of excellence in teaching and mentoring students; interest and energy to develop the program, collaborating with colleagues from multiple disciplines, students and the community; commitment to excellence in the liberal arts education and to social justice. Responsibilities: implementing new program (major and minor), recruiting students, mentoring and advising students, and nurturing research and work placement opportunities for students. Additional information regarding the position description is available at www.bluffton.edu. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee), and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, Ohio, 45817-2104. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time ***department chair position in Nursing*** beginning Fall 2011. Ph.D. in nursing or other terminal degree required. Provide leadership to the department of nursing, which included the traditional Baccalaureate Program, RN-BSN Adult Degree Program and the MSN in Leadership and Management. Twelve-month contract, salary determined by education and experience. Eastern Mennonite University uses an extended contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters to Nancy R. Heisey, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. http://www.emu.edu. ugdean@emu.edu Applicants will be acknowledged by letter. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time, continuing faculty position in ***special education and teacher education***. Ph.D. or Ed.D. in special education and/or related field; special education teaching experience required; additional generalist or specialist qualifications desirable. Teacher licensure, higher education experience, scholarly research and knowledge of NCATE preferred. Provide high quality instruction and leadership in an NCATE-accredited K-12 special education teacher education program grounded in the liberal arts. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate special education and generalist/specialist elementary/secondary curriculum and method courses; graduate teaching in M.A. in Education program; advising; field experience supervision; collaboration with other disciplines across campus. The successful candidate will have a commitment to the department's mission to prepare competent, caring, reflective practitioners who advocate for children and youth, develop caring learning environments, initiate and respond creatively to change, value service to others and integrate theory and practice in diverse classrooms. Participation in scholarly activities, and engagement in department, university and community service expected. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three letters of reference to Dr. Nancy Heisey, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. http://www.emu.edu. Email: ugdean@emu.edu. Application review begins immediately. Position will begin Fall 2011. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time ***faculty position in the department of nursing*** beginning Fall 2011. Doctoral degree in nursing or other terminal degree preferred. Teach classes in pediatric nursing and supervise clinical experiences in a tertiary medical center. Also included are possible teaching in an online MSN program in leadership/management, and assisting with laboratory learning, supervising students in their family experience and assisting with other learning experiences as needed. Student advising, university service, and ongoing professional scholarship expected. Nine-month contract, salary determined by education and experience. Eastern Mennonite University uses an extended contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters to Nancy R. Heisey, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. http://www.emu.edu. ugdean@emu.edu Applicants will be acknowledged by letter. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

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Camp Friedenswald is seeking someone to fill a ***voluntary service position*** for a minimum of a one-year term. Specific focus areas will be groundskeeping and general maintenance. Basic knowledge of construction, maintenance and mechanics are necessary. Housing, food and monthly stipend will be provided. Please call 269-476-9744 or email Justin@friedenswald.org for more information.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

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PRESIDENT FOR CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The Board of Governors of Conrad Grebel University College invites applications and/or nominations for the position of President, expected to be effective **July 1, 2011**. Conrad Grebel University College is a liberal arts college founded by the Mennonite Church, affiliated with the University of Waterloo, and grounded by its Christian identity and Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated ability for engaging various communities in fostering:

- the College values and mission – to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue justice and peace in service to church and society;
- its programs, which embrace undergraduate courses in Arts including the University of Waterloo Music and Peace & Conflict Studies programs, a graduate Theological Studies program, and an exceptional undergraduate residence and student life program. The resources of the College Library and Archives support these programs.

The College is committed to employment equity. Preference will be given to candidates who stand within the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition and have earned a doctorate. All inquiries will be kept in strict confidence. Applications and resumes should be received by **November 1, 2010** and be addressed to:

The Chair
Presidential Search Committee
Conrad Grebel University College
140 Westmount Road N.
Waterloo, ON, N2L 3G6, CANADA
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Profile and other details are found at:
http://www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/contact/presidential_search.shtml

Why do I bother?

Thomas Dunn is associate pastor of youth and young adults at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

On Sept. 5, Terry Shue was commissioned for his new role as director of leadership development for Mennonite Church USA.

As a friend, former colleague and one who developed under Terry's leadership, I was asked to share at Terry's commissioning service. Terry asked that I reflect and share on, "Why I bother with the church today and have hope for the church tomorrow."

I bother with the church because I am a Christian, because it is through the church that I came to know Christ, because it is through the church that I have been nurtured and continue to be nurtured in my walk with Christ, because it is through the church that I have experienced God, worshiped God and learned about God, because it is through the church that I have fellowship with other believers.

I hope we would all choose to accept the church for what it is but at the same time not be complacent about its shortcomings.

In short, I "bother" with the church for the same reason that I bother to breathe, that I bother to eat, and that I bother to drink. Just like my body would die if I did not breathe, eat or drink, so my spiritual health would suffer and soon die without the church.

Am I elevating the church to the level of God? It is God who sustains and nurtures us, Christ who saves us and the Spirit that fills us with spiritual life, so to say the church is doing these things is blasphemy.

Taken the wrong way, it may sound blasphemous, but I am saying that the church is the way God has chosen to work here on earth.

The church is the body of Christ. It is more than an institution, more than Kidron Mennonite Church, more than Mennonite Church USA, more than the colleges and many other parachurch organizations. The church is where two or more people gather together in the name of Christ.

If the answer to why I bother with the church is so straightforward, then you may ask why the question is even being asked. It is being asked because of our sin; we are a church of sinners. Wherever two or more people gather together in Christ's name, God is there, and that is "church." Likewise, wherever two or more people gather together in Christ's name, there are two or more sinners. There are also two or more people that are greedy, prideful, lustful, vengeful, petty, broken and desperately in need of the grace of God.

This sin is conspicuous in all: loyal church attendees, atheists and everyone in between. It should come as no surprise when the church is accused of hypocrisy. The church has no defense to this accusation; it is guilty as charged.

The choice is up to the accuser: accept the church for what it is as both the body of Christ here on earth and a group of fallen sinners or refuse to tolerate the hypocrisy and choose not to bother with the church.

My hope for the church tomorrow is that we can continue to be what God has called us to be, to be God's instrument here on earth, to bring people to faith, to nurture faith and to be the body of Christ.

I hope we would all choose to accept the church for what it is but at the same time not be complacent about its shortcomings.

Mennonite Church USA's vision statement (see box) has a line in it that captures my dream for the church; "... to grow as communities of grace."

We desperately need the grace of God, individually and corporately. We need to learn to extend grace to ourselves, to our brothers and sisters in the church and to those who do not yet know the Lord. No matter what we do, we will always carry with us the tarnish of sin, but by the grace of God we can carry on.

Vision: Healing and Hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ
and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow
as communities of grace, joy and peace
so that God's healing and hope flow
through us to the world.

FILM REVIEWS

Eat Pray Love (PG-13) is based on a travel memoir by Elizabeth Gilbert after her divorce. Despite some unrealistic and forced scenes, the beautiful scenes and fine acting from Julia Roberts makes it worthwhile. Richard Jenkins does an amazing job as "Richard from Texas" in India.—*Anna Groff*

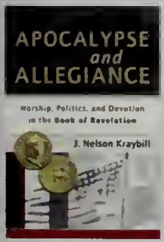
Get Low (PG-13) is based on the story of a Tennessee hermit (Robert Duvall) who famously threw his own rollicking funeral party in 1938 while he was still alive. Duvall brings him alive and offers many bon mots. The film deals with forgiveness and redemption but is weakened by a tepid, predictable ending.—*Gordon Houser*

DVD REVIEWS

A Prophet (R) is a French film that portrays an impoverished young Frenchman of Arab descent who is transformed in prison. Over the course of the film Malik learns to read, smuggle and murder in order to survive. It also carries overtones of France's uneasy relations with generations of Arab immigrants and their children.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEWS

Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation by J. Nelson Kraybill (Brazos Press, 2010, $21.99) is an accessible study of a book of the Bible that most Christians either ignore or interpret erroneously as "a catalog of predictions about events that would take place 2,000 years later." Kraybill argues instead that "it is a projector that casts archetypal images of good and evil onto a cosmic screen." He notes that both Genesis and Revelation use symbol and poetry to "make the confessional statement that God is sovereign." Kraybill ends each chapter with a story of faithfulness. This would make an excellent resource for a Sunday school class.—*gh*



Lessons from 'American Pickers'

The History Channel has discovered a jackpot: viewers who want to watch reality shows about antiques. One has become especially popular: "American Pickers" (Mondays at 9 p.m. ET). But the recipe for its success does not include the usual ingredients for TV shows. Photogenic subjects are one ingredient missing, but that makes the reality more convincing.

"American Pickers" is about two men, Mike Wolfe and Frank Fitz, who drive all over the country looking for what they call "rusty gold." They look for "no above-ground pool, no brand-new satellite dish, no swing set, no brand-new truck, the yard not mowed, no new landscaping and tarp on the roof." The goal: to sell what they pick for a profit.

Their business, Antique Archeology, is anchored by an employee named Danielle Colby-Cushman at their home base in LeClaire, Iowa. The reality part of the show often begins and ends with Danielle, at times the target of the men's frustration and at times the target of their admiration. She researches possible sites for them to pick. If she sends them to a site where they can collect some of their specialties (old bicycles and ancient cans of motor oil are two examples), they are happy with Danielle. If she sends them to a site where the collector is unwilling to part with anything in the collection, they grump about Danielle wasting their time.

As Chris Jordaon wrote in his TV Squad column on Aug. 29: "'American Pickers' is one of the few remaining places—perhaps the local news being the other—where a viewer can watch real people being real. Granted, the [subjects] of the show are eccentric, but they're certainly without pretension or artifice. Wolfe, Fritz and a small production crew find genuine people in remote places far from any casting agent's office. They're often a little screwy, but that's the fun of it. You're certainly not going to see them in another reality show next week."

The real gold is the "screwy" people. Since most of them are elderly, they are the "rusty gold." As Wolfe and Fritz sift through mounds of detritus, it's the person whose inventory they "pick" who becomes the focus. After each pick and as the two men drive away, the camera usually lets the collector describe his or her experience.

This finding of treasure is parallel to Jesus' three parables in Matthew 13:44-50. Here's the first one:

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (v. 44).

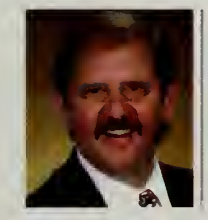
This "someone" is a biblical picker. But what is the treasure that would be in a field? A sack full of coins? A diamond in the rough. Crude oil? A rare plant with medicinal properties?

In "American Pickers," the real treasures are the people featured, not the objects with enough sentimentality to be profitable.

Jordaon points out that hoarders are shown in a negative light in many other TV shows. But here they are shown respect for their practice. Their knowledge of history or the value of cherished items is affirmed. They are affirmed.

What would happen if we spiritualized this as an application for congregational life?

As we age, all of us accumulate baggage, maybe even junk. We do so because we treasure it. I would find it affirming if someone would "pick" through my hoard and find value in it—doing so with respect. TM



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I certify that all information furnished in this is true and complete.
Everett J. Thomas, Editor

The book of Job

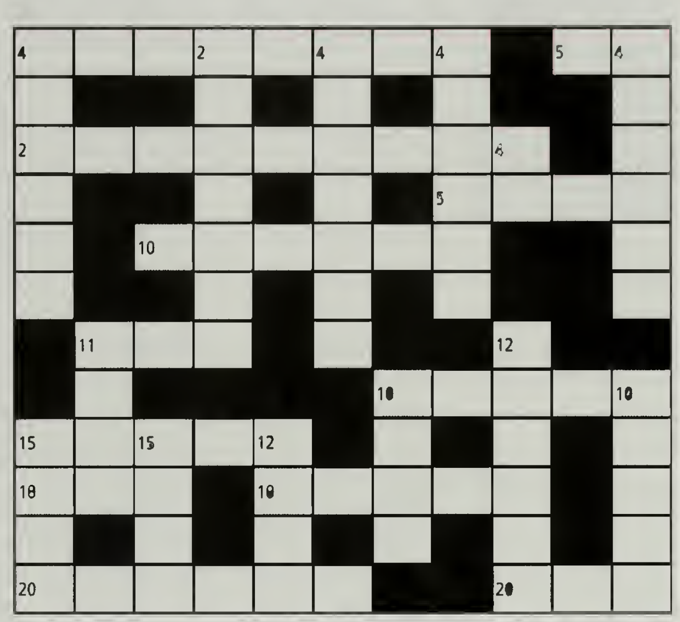
By Jeanette Baer Showalter

All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS
1. The large land animal mentioned in Job.
5. "__, that I had someone to hear me!" (31:35).
7. The large creature of the sea.
9. "You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your ___." (22:27).
10. "He is wooing you from the jaws of distress … to the comfort of your table laden with ____ food." (36:16).
11. Elihu's father came from this place. (32:2).
13. The dragon in Job 26:12.
15. God turns everything Job has over to this being, but warns him not to lay a finger on Job himself.
18. Job 28:2 speaks of copper being smelted from ___.
19. This type of being came to God prior to Job's first and second tests (singular).
20. "My offenses will be ____ up in a bag; you will cover over my sin." (14:17).
21. "Where then is my hope? Who can ___ any hope for me?" (17:15).

DOWN

1. Job's Shuhite friend.
2. The oldest of Job's friends; the Temanite.
3. This bird is scorned for its nesting habits (Ch. 39).
4. "Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of ___." (Ch. 25).
6. One of Job's friends speaks of these made of clay, whose foundations are in the dust. (plural) (4:19).
8. "Have you considered my servant Job? There is __ one on earth like him …" (Ch. 1).
11. "He is the Maker of the ___ and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south." (9:9).
12. Some believe the giant sea monster in Job is one of these large marine mammals (plural).
13. "Why has your heart carried you away, and why do your eyes flash, so that you vent your ___ against God . . ." (15:12-13).
14. "Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large ___ turn you aside." (36:18).
15. Job had seven of these. (Ch. 1).
16. A desert city and caravan route mentioned in Ch. 6.
17. "In the land of Uz there lived a man whose ___ was Job."



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Answers to the puzzle are on page 57.

(Continued from page 4)

Nicolás Angustia (team leader), Celso Jaime, Sandra Perez and Sonni Carrión, this unique biconference team is charged with tending the spiritual life of the 15 Mennonite Church USA congregations (Hispanic, Anglo, Garifuna and African-American) that comprise the NYC Council of Mennonite Churches. The new arrangement formalizes local biconference oversight, conflating the roles of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference bishops and Atlantic Coast Conference conference ministers in NYC. Council administrative and program operations (biconference for 40 years) continue to be led by the executive committee.—*Nicolas Angustia (oversight ministry team leader, NYC Council of Mennonite Churches), Warren Tyson (Atlantic Coast Conference), Keith Weaver (Lancaster Conference), Ruth Yoder Wenger (moderator, NYC Council of Mennonite Churches)*

Appreciates ethnicity

I want to commend you for the articles on Mennonite ethnic and religious identity in the July issue ("Being Mennonite" by Karl Landis and "So You Wanna Be a Mennonite?" by Joanna Harader). However, I also want to offer an alternative perspective as a blended ethnic Mennonite raised in a tight-knit Swiss-Mennonite community.

For many Mennonites, not only is it impossible to separate religion from culture, but this distinction is often unhelpful. The two are inextricably interwoven. To tease them apart would be like taking apart a beautiful tapestry to identify the materials of which it is made. Being Mennonite is not synonymous with being Swiss; however, let us not belittle the cultural contribution of the Swiss-Germans to the Mennonite Church or focus on the negative aspects of Swiss-German culture with only a nod to the positive.

When I look at the larger Mennonite church, I see the population of ethnic Mennonites shrinking to a minority in our denomination. While embracing diversity is good and necessary in a global society, we should not forget to appreciate and celebrate the richness of our own cultural heritage. If we lose the characteristic Swiss-German culture, we have lost some of the beauty that Mennonites contribute to our world. I have even come to relish many of the social faux-pas committed by Swiss Mennonites (some of which Harader mentions in her article). I find that they are one of the great untapped sources of humor in our church.
—*Anna (Dunn) Knutson, Kidron, Ohio*

Orthopraxy, not orthodoxy

I am troubled by Steve Dintaman's suggestion that we need some kind of Christian orthodoxy in our colleges (Letters, August). What does this seemingly innocuous phrase "Christian orthodoxy" mean? We have Jesus and the Bible, what more do we need? However, well meaning attempts to reduce the Bible to some "orthodox" tenets will always fail. Jesus spent his life preaching orthopraxy, not orthodoxy, and it would behoove his church to do likewise.—*Mitchell Brown, Wilmette, Ill.*

White will enrich Bethel College

I read with interest the report of Perry White's appointment as president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. (August). I commend the board for its willingness to look beyond the Mennonite community to find a leader with gifts and experience in areas that will address Bethel's specific, immediate needs. Like many others, however, I hope that hiring a president who "does not come from an Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition" will not weaken the college's commitment to the worthy tenets of historical Anabaptism.

The board of Bethel College believes their new president's diversity of experience in Catholic and Presbyterian institutions will enrich their campus and enhance his effectiveness in leadership at a Mennonite school. I hope they are right, and I applaud their courage and vision.—*Eric A. Kouns, Irwin, Ohio*

Wants more obituary information

I note the obits are pretty much alike—do you edit submissions or have a form you send out? At any rate, the funeral or memorial service seems to be always listed. It would be most helpful to genealogical workers if the name and location of the burial cemetery would be included or cremation indicated if that is the case. Perhaps you have no control over this? But if there is any way to get that extra sentence in, it would be most helpful. I have been using "MennObits" extensively, and love the info that was given in the *Gospel Herald* obits. This is a most useful resource. I assume entries are still being made. Is that so, and if so, who does it or oversees it?—*Art Smucker, Goshen, Ind.*

Editor's note: *When obituary information is placed on the form on our website, we send all the information to MennObits, the site maintained by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee. This can include information about burial site or cremation. We are limited in the amount of space we can offer free in* The Mennonite. *However, family members may add additional information and a photo by purchasing the additional space.*

Thanks for Myron Schrag piece

Please accept my thanks and compliments for the great statement from Myron Schrag ("Holy or Unholy Land?") in your September issue. It was not only well written but said things that desperately need to be said and dealt with by the church as well as the nation.—*Melvin Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

Thanks for articles on child safety

I read the September issue in two days. Thank you for doing articles on child safety. This problem has been overlooked by the Mennonite church for years. It needs to be addressed. I know too many injured children.—*Gloria Swartzendruber on Facebook*

First things first First give a greeting of peace

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Shalom!" I can still hear this customary greeting from Raymond Charles, once my overseer. He nearly always began his sermons with this word of greeting, beckoning his hearers to respond with a hearty "Shalom!" The ancient Hebrew greeting best expressed Raymond's desire for peace embodied in holistic well-being.

Raymond may well have been pursuing the same goal that Jesus had in mind when he sent his disciples two by two ahead of him to announce the coming reign of God. Among other words of instruction, he said to them, "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If the head of the house loves peace, your peace will rest on that house; if not, it will return to you" (Luke 10:5-6).

I have been meditating on the significance of this instruction of Jesus to his disciples. Was he simply endorsing ancient customs applicable only to his day? Or should this saying provide guidance for greetings in our day? What might prompt us to begin a conversation or social exchange with words of peace?

In some cultures, it is common courtesy to exchange words of peace with the people you meet. Jews use the words "shalom aleichem." Muslims use a phrase that sounds similar—"salaam alaikum." Both phrases may be translated "Peace to you" in English.

After his death and resurrection, Jesus greeted his frightened disciples with the words, "Peace be with you" (Luke 24:36). In a sermon at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., on April 11, pastor Phil Kniss expounded on this Lucan text. He compared the troubled disciples hiding behind closed doors to a game huddle at half time. He then introduced the ritual of "passing the peace." In each Sunday service, we now turn to two or three people near us—whether they are dear friends or unknown visitors—and greet them with the words, "The peace of Christ be with you," and they respond, "and also with you." (See http://www.pvmcsermons.com/2010/04/phil-kniss-jesus-at-half-time.html for a fuller explanation. Pastor Kniss explained the greeting of peace near the end of the sermon.) In a reflection later on, Phil explained to me that "daily conversations at home, at work or in the public are often laced with sharp, competitive or even hostile words in which the speaker seeks the advantage and sets the stage for deeper alienation or violence." Together we wonder how Christians might change this atmosphere by first saying words of peace in every human encounter.

One can apply this teaching in written communication as well. Jennifer Davis Sensenig, lead pastor at Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, prefaces her emails—even brief requests for information—with the words, "Peace be with you." She explains her practice this way: "High tech, high touch" is now a cliché, but a greeting of peace is my humble attempt to yield even electronic communication to the touch of the gospel. We never know what situations the recipient of our email may be facing. 'Peace be with you' may be the only words of Jesus that he or she hears that day. More than once, this habit has helped me modify not only an email but my attitude of complaint, obstinacy or self-importance. Greetings of peace are also appreciated by people who do not identify with any faith tradition. I agree with Jesus that a gesture of peace is a great way to begin."

Jesus' instruction to his disciples has much to say about social practices today.

Having reflected on Jesus' teaching and the examples of respected leaders, I now believe that Jesus' instruction to his disciples has much to say about social practices today. I invite you to take a journey with me, experimenting with new ways of greeting those we meet—strangers as well as friends. Who knows what new vistas of healing and hope may emerge through our heartfelt announcements of God's shalom?

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FROM THE EDITOR

Talking with each other

Gordon Houser

The church today is made up of many traditions. It always has been. We can lament or celebrate that diversity, but we have to acknowledge it, despite the temptation to think our little group (and Mennonites are miniscule in the whole scheme of things) is the true church.

The General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC), which would have turned 150 years old in May if it still existed, began in part as an attempt to address this diversity. Its founders wanted the Mennonites in North America to be unified without necessarily thinking alike. They adopted the phrase "in essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty." The trick is figuring out what are essentials. One these founders chose comes from 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ."

Though it failed often, as any institution does, the GCMC emphasized two things that stand out to me: (1) We live out our faith primarily in the intimacy of a congregation, and (2) everyone should have a voice in decisions.

Perhaps we can learn to stand together in that gap where we come to unity by talking with each other instead of about each other.

I joined a Mennonite congregation shortly after college. It happened to be GCMC, although at that time it belonged to an area conference (Western District) but not the denomination (an option not available now). We joined the GCMC four years later, in 1980.

I didn't join the congregation because it was GCMC, which I knew nothing about, but because of the life together it shared. But in two years I was working for *The Mennonite*, the GCMC magazine (and one of the predecessors of this one), and I learned much about the workings of that Mennonite denomination.

I attended all the triennial sessions, which included GCs from Canada and the United States (plus some from South American churches), and reported on the debates as well as the worship. Imperfect as it was, the process encouraged hearing from everyone who wanted to speak. And every congregation could send a delegate if it chose to. The discussions became messy at times Certainly not all GCs thought alike, but it seemed to work.

After this summer's annual meeting of the Western District Conference, I heard from some people who attended that they miss the times of working together at such conferences on tough issues. They seemed to be concerned there might be an avoidance of conflict going on.

If that is the case (it's probably more complicated than that), I understand it. Who likes conflict? Mennonites certainly don't.

However, true unity, argues pastor Susan Ortman Goering in her reflections on Ephesians 4 (page 25), calls us to address concerns and disagreements. She refers to Parker Palmer, who calls the separation between what is and what can be the tragic gaps in our lives.

Entering that gap, she writes, is what it means to agree and disagree in love. "Are we willing to stay in this gap, to dialogue when we do not agree?"

Elizabeth Raid writes our cover story about her father, Howard Raid, who was an important GCMC leader (page 12). She calls him a builder of bridges who never sought personal power. "Following the biblical call for mutual aid and stewardship meant service was more important than chairing a committee," she writes.

Perhaps we can learn from the heritage and the ideals of the GCMC and stand together in that gap where we come to unity by talking with each other instead of about each other.—*gh*

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The beat of mission

Special section begins on page 12

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- The law of liberty
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- The Christian Harry Potter
- Editorial: Our turn to ask forgiveness

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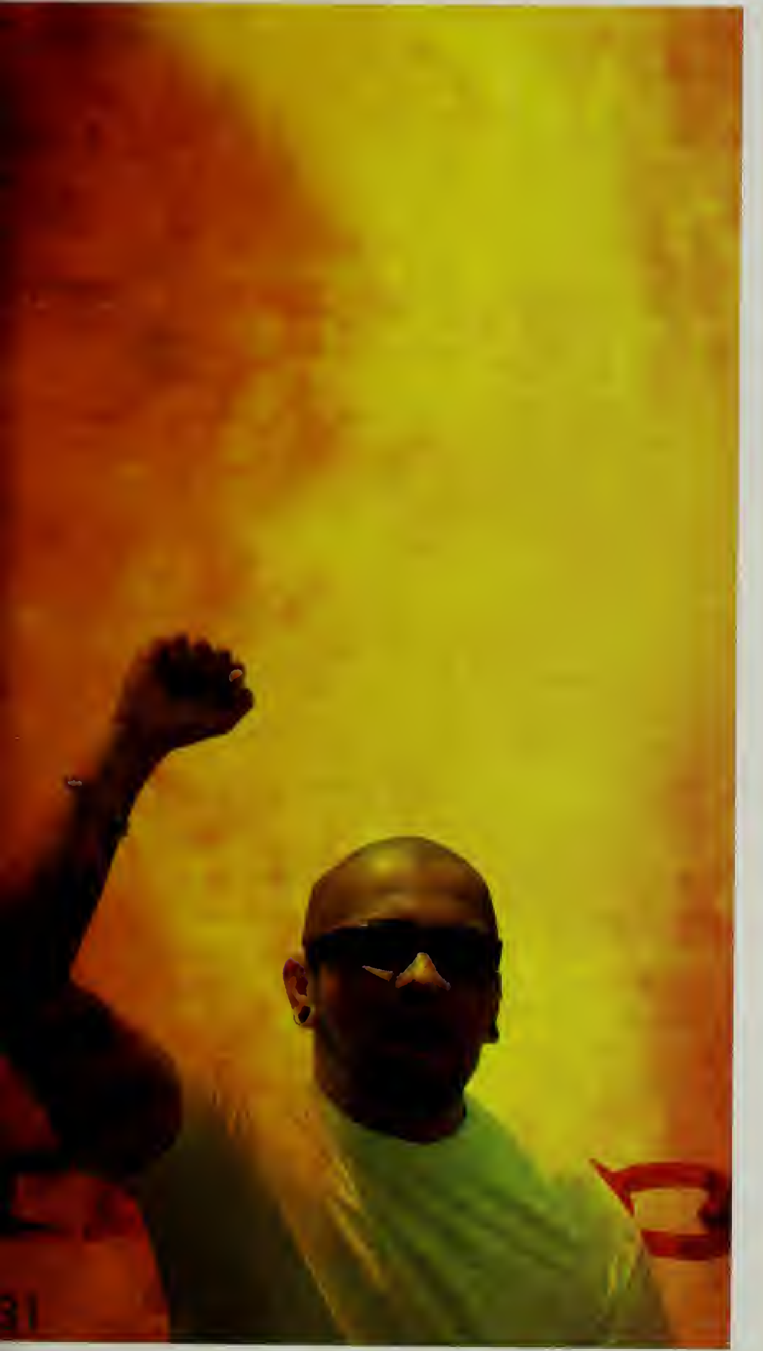

ON THE COVER: Roger Lukusa Mkanda praises God with the Dipumba Plaine congregation of Communauté Evangélique Mennonite au Congo (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo) in Mbuji Mayi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Photo by James Krabill

TheMennonite
November 2010 | Volume 13, Number 11

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Holy or Unholy Land?

I read Myron Schrag's "Holy or Unholy Land" (Opinion, September). What a great article, indeed! So well written and to the point. I took several trips to Israel, the first in 1950, right after the "invasion and occupation" by the Jews of the Holy Land. I was a "cowboy" on a ship with a load of mules for the Jews. We were given a tour of Palestine and a big dose of propaganda. I was 100 percent for them at that time.

In 1969, my wife and I took a tour of the Middle East, including Israel. After I saw what they were doing to the Palestinians, I turned 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

What galls me is that we (our tax money) give Israel $3 billion for military supplies each year. And it is our Catapillar bulldozers that demolish the Palestinian houses and destroy their olive orchards. I try not to be anti-Semitic, but it's difficult to not be that way. I have no problem with the Jewish people—it's the Israeli government that I have adverse feelings about. *—Jack Stauffer, Newton, Kan.*

In "Holy or Unholy Land?" Myron Schrag gave us his view of the political events in Israel/Palestine. However, his view is biased and does not explore the Israeli rationale for their actions and simply paints the Palestinians as innocent victims in the entire conflict. For example, Schrag denounces the wall and is critical of the Israelis for building it. But he fails to explain why the Israelis would want to build it. The wall was built to reduce incursions by suicide terrorists into Israel. Schrag is negligent when he does not tell us about the untold, horrifying murders, carnage, mayhem and destruction inflicted on Israelis over the years by suicide terrorists.

The reader is left to ponder whether Schrag's obtuse observations and obfuscations of the political and economic realities merely hide his true anti-Semitic feelings. Maybe he has never read Genesis 12:3.*—Galen Dise, Paradise, Pa.*

Please accept my thanks and compliments for the great statement from Myron Schrag ("Holy or Unholy Land?") in your September issue. It was not only well written but also said things that desperately need to be said and dealt with by the church as well as the nation.*—Mel Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

Do we need a new hymnal?

"Do We Need a New Hymnal?" Everett Thomas asked (September), saying: "Our hymnal is our prayer book. It is the way we, together, speak most passionately to God."

No. Our prayer book is written in our hearts, not something we leave in the pews on Sunday. Singing can be prayerful but can't substitute for prayer. When people pray, the Spirit moves.

Our directions must come from God, not Internet opinion polls. Our priorities are prayer and education, not profitability and entertainment.

Also in that issue, John Longhurst sent up a flare on the growing crisis of biblical illiteracy caused partly by using Scriptures out of context based on "felt needs" rather than using a curricular approach ("Why Do So Many Not Know the Bible?"). A curricular approach can also enhance church signs, bulletins, *The Mennonite*—we can become better storytellers.

Ron Rempel asked, "Does Church Publishing Matter?" (September). Yes. But our biggest publishing opportunity isn't getting "cues we need on what to publish" ("felt needs"). It's collectively creating Spirit-led materials that transcend denominational boundaries, sending them—sometimes free—at the touch of a button to ignite spiritual flames worldwide, while rekindling our own hearths and hearts.

We can't afford being distracted by a hymnal for six years. Prayer and revival, teaching and reversing biblical illiteracy can be our better hymn to God. As Longhurst's article noted, the biblical story is our story, our identity. If we fail to tell it, we fail. It's time we learn how to teach. And that requires prayer. —*Brenda Miller, Orrville, Ohio*

I voted "not sure" in the website poll you were taking concerning a new hymnal by 2016. The reason: We are not using *Hymnal, A Worship Book* to the fullest extent now and as a church seem to be moving more and more away from our heritage of good hymn singing.

I guess I would be in favor of a new hymnal if I knew we would use the new book. But at this point, I'm not sure. It is my hope that at some point we will wake up and realize the heritage we have in our congregational singing. May it be so.—*Paul Metzler, Lititz, Pa.*

Missionary women were significant
Thank you for highlighting the lives of four missionary women whose contributions were significant ("Four Women Leave Legacies," October). It was refreshing.—*Sara Wengerd, Goshen, Ind.*

Racial healing stories
I enjoyed the articles on racial healing in the church (September). I thought it would be helpful for all of us to hear the stories that were shared by the Racial Healing Task Group at the Leaders Forum Sept. 24-25 in Pittsburgh. Human stories are the best way to educate people on needs that must be addressed. I hope the people who shared their stories would be open to making these stories more public.—*Wilma Loganbill, Hesston, Kan.*

Editor's note: *We have sent this request to the task force. See page 39 for a report on the Leaders Forum.*

First things first
Ervin Stutzman, new executive director of Mennonite Church USA, shares a vision for the church that is vital enough to renew the church. This vision is as old as the Christian church. The "First Things First" column (page 63), share two basic tenets.

In July, he spelled out the crucial need to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ. That may sound like, Yes, of course. But the gospel has often been in second or third place. We have many times stressed a lot of important things, but are they the gospel that saves from sin and gives us new life? When analyzed, are they not many times the fruit or result of the gospel? But are they the gospel?

Jesus Christ is the engine that pulls the train. He is the Redeemer of the world. Love is fine, and peace is fine, but salvation comes only in knowing and following the Source of love and peace.

In the August issue, Stutzman said many believe the day for apostles is over. But he disagrees, and I agree with him. The apostle is a "sent one" to go out and invite others to come in. Evangelism is a good word for today and is more needed now than ever. Do we believe in a Savior who turns lives around? As Stutzman concluded, to move from "maintenance to mission" we need apostles who can lead the way.

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

November is Missions Month in Mennonite Church USA. The features offered by Mennonite Mission Network this year begin with a compelling story: the courageous evangelist Mutangidiki in a Bashilele village in the Congo (page 12).

We expect that many of our readers will receive this issue before Halloween. Gerald Shenk's column (page 35) provides a compelling new perspective on this silly season.

This issue also includes some important news and photos. On page 37, Mennonite Mission Network announces its intent to merge with Third Way Media.

But it is a decision the Executive Board needs to make in January that is providing leaders with the greatest challenge: whether to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix. Paul Schrag recounts the Executive Board's wrestling with the matter (page 38). Sheldon Good describes the Leaders Forum's struggles with the same issue (page 39). Both writers are editors with *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

Some readers may wonder why we are not providing our own reporting from these events. The reason: I and our board of directors were full participants in these meetings. It would be inappropriate for me to function as both participant and reporter. We are grateful that Schrag agreed to let us reprint their reports.

This participation is part of several new agreements with the Executive Board (see the August editorial). Another is a request that the Executive Board occasionally be allowed to publish something with no editing by *The Mennonite*. To that end, we publish moderator Ed Diller's piece entitled, "'Conversation Room' at Pittsburgh 2011" (page 46). This occasional column will be called Communiqué and include the subtitle, "Official Communication from Mennonite Church USA."—*Editor*

Speak the good news of Jesus

Ron Adams is a pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

In 1981, my wife, Marilou, and I went to Calcutta, where we spent three and a half months volunteering with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. It was an experience that changed our lives.

We both grew up in the Assemblies of God. We have many happy memories of those days and remain grateful for what we learned about Jesus, things that continue to influence our faith. What was missing, though, was an appreciation for the scope of Christian mission.

What we learned growing up was that it was our obligation to tell people about Jesus and to encourage them to accept him as their Savior. Jesus was the answer, we were told. All we were called to do was to tell others about Jesus so they could be saved.

While we were taught to be personally generous and loving to those in need, I don't recall any discussion of larger systemic or societal needs, such as racism, poverty or violence. Such evils, we believed, were simply the result of sin, for which personal salvation was the remedy. Talk of service in other parts of the world was focused solely on taking Jesus to "the uttermost parts."

To be fair, these are memories of my youth and may not represent the full picture. What I can say, though, is that what we learned in our home congregation in no way prepared us for our time in Calcutta.

> Our tradition understands that how we live and how we love is as important as what we believe and what we say.

That summer we encountered poverty on a scale we'd never imagined: People begging on every street corner. Children hanging out by the YWCA, hoping for someone to buy them a meal. The size and energy of a massive city, noisy, loud, strange to our Lancaster-raised minds.

Neither were we prepared for the beauty of the people we met. For the communion we experienced with Christians, Hindus and Muslims. The generosity of those street children who took whatever food we'd bought them home to be shared with their families. The fierce commitment of the Missionaries of Charity. The passion of the city and finding that Christ was there long before us.

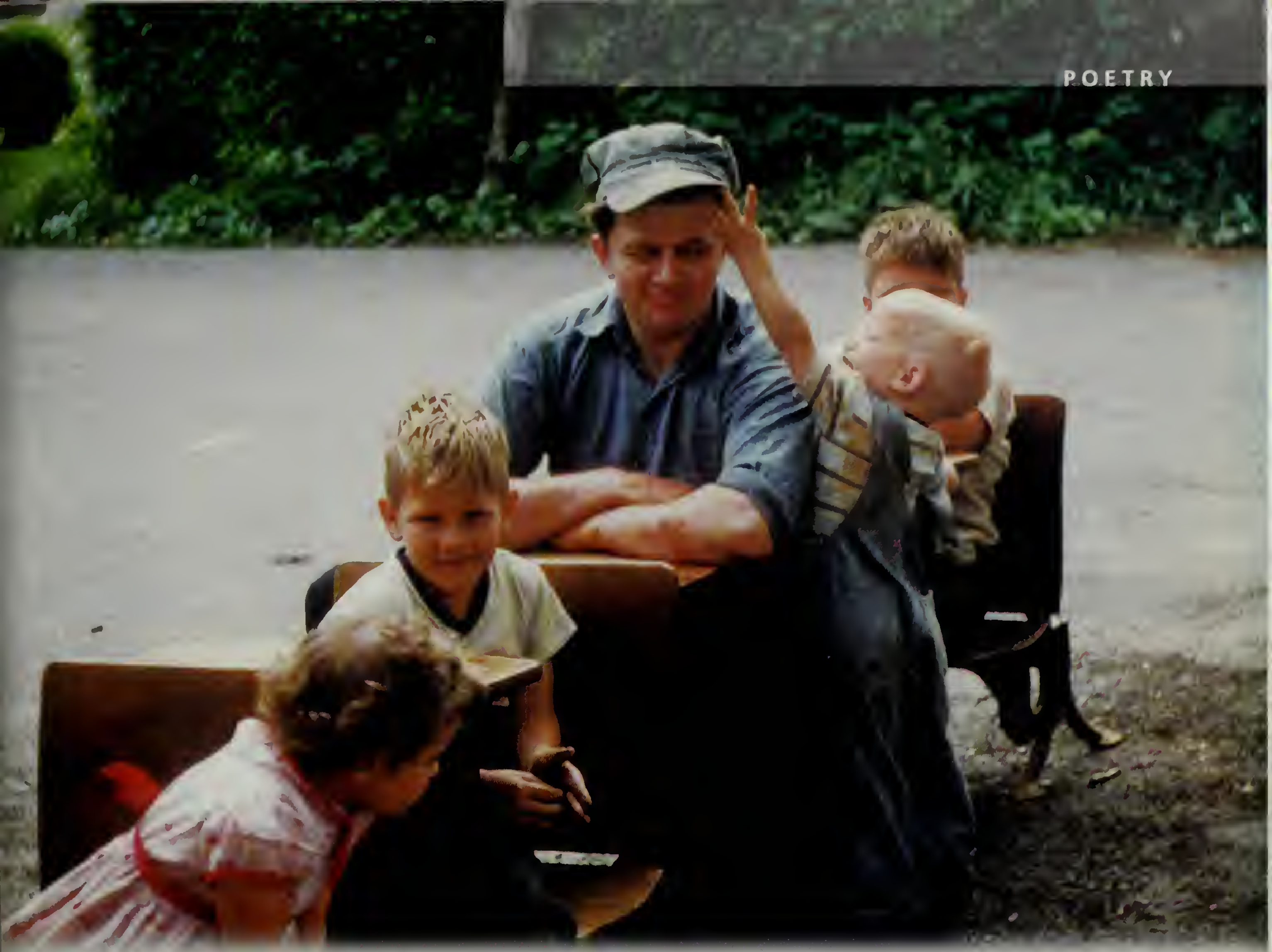
We came home changed, confused. We had no language—theological or otherwise—for what we'd experienced.

The individualistic religion we'd carried with us was too small to make sense of what we'd seen and learned. How can we say that Jesus loves the little children and not care how they live? How can we say that Jesus is the answer when the questions being asked were beyond our experience?

So it was that we discovered Anabaptism, a tradition that certainly calls us to speak the good news of Jesus wherever we go. A tradition that encourages us to invite others to "taste and see that the Lord is good." But a tradition that calls us to do more than speak the good news. A tradition that calls us to incarnate that good news through the works of our minds and our hands and our feet. A tradition that understands mission to be more than getting people saved but is also about offering ourselves to the world around us and in every way. A tradition that understands that how we live and how we love is as important as what we believe and what we say; that incarnation is not something once and done but is instead our highest and constant calling. A tradition that helped us make sense of our time in Calcutta and has shaped us ever since.

We discovered we could love and be loved by our Hindu and Muslim friends without insisting that they accept Christ first. We could not only tell the good news but hear it spoken by new friends in accents quite different from our own. We could make the connection between our faith in Jesus and systemic issues and work in Christ's name toward a more just and peaceful world. We could see ourselves as part of a much larger work of God than we'd ever imagined, one not bound by human prejudice.

When people ask how we became Mennonites, Marilou and I say it was God's will. And we mean it. God used our time in Calcutta to make us Mennonites. And we are grateful. TM



Thanksgiving

by Everett J. Thomas

"You have to take your hat off in school," scolded 3-year-old Lowell when Dad paused to play.

Old desks from Mother's brief reign as one-room school teacher. I wanted the back seat, but it was taken by big brother Warren. I went for the front row. But sister Nadine, budding feminist, got there first. Nothing to do but mug for the camera.

It was 1957. The men in the butcher shop washed their hands for lunch but did not bother about blood on forearms.

Fifty years have made their claims: Lowell's left hand lost in a meat grinder eight years later.
Nadine, curious journalist, gone at 36.
Our genial and gentle Father, gone at 66.
Warren, compassionate trucker, gone at 61.

We played school that one day. Afterward, the desks were buried in the basement to rust and mold.

From dust to dust, says Ecclesiastes.

I give thanks for the wisp of life in-between.

Thomas wrote this prose poem after his brother's unexpected death on Aug. 4. The photo was taken at their home in Willow Street, Pa.

Gift allows child abuse book to be given free

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Mennonite Church USA congregations will receive a free copy of *Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect*, thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor. The donor provided the funds because of an experience of abuse that happened in a church a number of years ago.

Let the Children Come was written by Jeanette Harder, a member of First Mennonite Church in Lincoln, Neb., and a professor at the Grace Abbott School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The book aims to help congregations learn about their role in ending child abuse and neglect in churches, homes, extended families, neighborhoods and schools.
—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

First woman moderator for Virginia Conference

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Shirley Yoder Brubaker, a 2010 Eastern Mennonite Seminary graduate, was named the first female moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference, beginning Sept. 1. Yoder Brubaker has been involved in ministry in various settings for at least 20 years. After retiring as associate pastor at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg in 2001, she went on to interim pastoral assignments in Mississippi, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Harrisonburg. It took her 26 years to complete her master of divinity degree. "Life kept interrupting my studies," she says, "but I was committed to finishing that degree. It was a wonderful way to keep myself immersed in the Word and to maintain awareness of what was going on in the broader church."

Yoder Brubaker's vision for the conference centers around her commitment to the unity of the church.
—*Virginia Mennonite Conference*

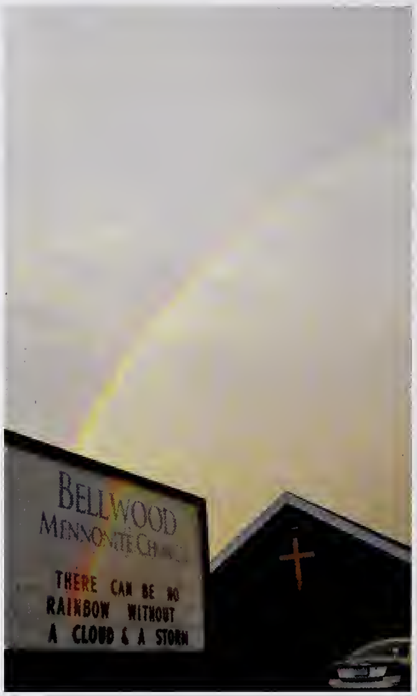
Former MWC executive dies in auto crash

STRASBOURG, France—Matiku Thomas Nyitambe, a prominent leader in the Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania, was killed in an automobile accident Oct. 3 while driving from his native home of Kirongwe, Tanzania, near the Kenyan border.

His wife, Penina, sustained relatively minor injuries. Nyitambe served as general secretary of the KMT from 2001 to 2007 and was serving on the KMT Executive Council at the time of his death.

He served on the Mennonite World Conference general council from 2003 to 2009 and on the MWC Executive Committee from 2006 to 2009. He also worked professionally in various government capacities in Tanzania.—*MWC*

Allison Politsky



Read the sign

"There is no way I could have planned this. It was definitely a God-thing," writes Dave Miller, pastor at Bellwood Mennonite Church in Milford, Neb. Miller put these letters on the sign early on Sept. 23; a neighbor took the photo that afternoon.

Truman Brunk, EMU campus pastor, dies Oct. 8

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Truman H. Brunk, 79, a former campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, died Oct. 8 in Harrisonburg.

Brunk joined the EMU faculty in 1965 following his ordination and served as campus pastor 12 years. He was chair of the renovation committee for major renovations to Lehman Auditorium in the mid-1970s. Brunk then served briefly as director of college relations, overseeing the areas of church, alumni and media relations, and annual and special giving.

Brunk will be remembered by many for his leadership in the "miracle library drive" of early December 1969, working with EMU students who raised $111,000 in four days of fundraising to rescue the threatened building project. The Sadie Hartzler library was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1971.—*EMU*

Metzger is new general secretary for MC Canada

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Why would Willard Metzger leave a position with World Vision to move into the role of General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada? His response to that question was immediate and simple—obedience to God's call.

Accepting the new role, which began on Nov. 1, involved an intense discernment process. The prospect of relocating to Winnipeg from Drayton, Ontario, was a serious discussion point for Metzger and Lois, his wife, who have worked diligently to integrate their son Matthew, born with Downs Syndrome, into the mainstream school system and community. The idea of uprooting Matthew, now 21, from the community that has embraced him, was unfathomable. So with Metzger's acceptance of the General Secretary role, arrangements were made to

Conestoga Mennonite celebrates 250 years

Janie Hunsberger, left, views the 21 wedding dresses of women who were married at the Conestoga Mennonite Church in Morgantown, Pa., since the beginning of the 1900s. Conestoga celebrated its 250th anniversary Sept. 24-26. Freda Petersheim, right, is a member at Conestoga. It is the oldest Mennonite congregation of Amish-Mennonite origin in the United States today.—*Conestoga Mennonite Church*

ensure that the Metzger family was able to remain in Drayton. "It will take creativity and commitment to make this arrangement work, but with the strong, committed staff at Mennonite Church Canada, I am confident that we can make it work," Metzger said. —*Mennonite Church Canada*

Historical Committee names contest winners

GOSHEN, Ind.—Examinations of two 20th-century frontiers of Mennonite faithfulness were the winning entries in this year's John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest, sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

"Incarnation, Not Intervention: Mennonite Service and Just Peacemaking in Somalia" by Peter Sensenig was judged the best paper in the graduate school/seminary category.

"The Mennonite Young People's Conference Movement, 1919-1923: Beyond the Tragedy of Its Failure to the Legacy of Its Vision" by Anna Showalter took first in the college/university category.

Sensenig, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., explored the ethical underpinnings of Mennonite responses to the humanitarian disaster in Somalia in the 1990s.

Showalter, from Goshen (Ind.) College, focused on the Mennonite Young People's Conference, a short-lived but influential reform movement that challenged the "Old" Mennonite Church and its understandings of peace, service and discipleship.—*Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee*

176 bikers raise $7,000 for MCC's water project

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—A record 176 riders pedaled through the local countryside on Sept. 18 during the 2010 MCC Flatlander Bike Ride.

Bikers traveled from eight to 67 miles in Kansas, including North Newton, Newton, Sedgwick, Bentley, Burrton and Halstead. One set of grandparents pulled their two grandsons, aged 2 and 4, the entire 67 miles. The 2010 MCC Flatlander Bike Ride raised more than $7,000 for a water project, "Bore Holes for Better Health," sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee in Nigeria. In a remote part of Nigeria, nine boreholes (wells) will be drilled to provide safe water sources close to where people live, so that women will not have to carry water for long distances. Donations from this ride will cover the cost of one of these boreholes.—*MCC Central States*

The Naked Anabaptist a best-seller for MPN

WATERLOO, Ont., and SCOTTDALE, Pa.—With more than 4,700 sold, *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* by Stuart Murray is a runaway best-seller for Herald Press, the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN).

"We knew the book would resonate with many people, but we didn't expect it to sell out so quickly," says Ron Rempel, executive director of MPN.

Especially satisfying for Rempel is seeing the book going out in bunches of 10 to 20 copies or more to churches for use by Christian education classes and study groups.

"We hoped it would be used by congregations as a way to discuss what it means to be an Anabaptist today," he says. "It's great to see so many churches using it."

Five thousand copies of *The Naked Anabaptist* were published in April. A second-run of 5,000 copies has been ordered.

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith is available from Mennonite Publishing Network at www.mpn.net/nakedanabaptist for $13.99. Churches that order five copies or more get 25 percent off through the MPN Study Shelf. Go to www.faithandliferesources.org/Studyshelf/ for more information.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

Behavioral economics does not always address our irrational choices

Perhaps, like me, you wonder why people (other people, not myself) make decisions about what to buy that are clearly bad for them. Behavioral economics is a field that tries to address such questions and, in many cases, to offer solutions.

In an article in the July 14 edition of the *New York Times*, George Loewenstein, a professor of economics and psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, and Peter Ubel, a professor of business and public policy at Duke, look at the increasingly popular field of behavioral economics and question its effectiveness.

Behavioral economics "incorporates elements from psychology to explain why people make seemingly irrational decisions, at least according to traditional economic theory and its emphasis on rational choice," write Loewenstein and Ubel. For example, it addresses why people under-save for retirement, why they eat too much and exercise too little and why they buy energy-inefficient light bulbs and appliances.

But, they write, the field has its limits. "Take, for example, our nation's obesity epidemic. The fashionable response, based on the belief that better information can lead to better behavior, is to influence consumers through things like calorie labeling—for instance, there's a mandate in the health-care reform act requiring restaurant chains to post the number of calories in their dishes."

However, studies have shown that calorie posting has had little impact on dieters' choices. "Obesity isn't a result of a lack of information; instead, economists argue that rising levels of obesity can be traced to falling food prices, especially for unhealthy processed foods," they write.

Instead of posting calories, then, we need to change the relative price of healthful and unhealthful food, they write. "For example, we need to stop subsidizing corn, thereby raising the price of high fructose corn syrup used in sodas, and we also need to consider taxes on unhealthful foods. But because we lack the political will to change the price of junk food, we focus on consumer behavior."

Another example of reliance on behavioral economics is a "gallons-per-mile" bill passed by the New York State Senate that is supposed to help drivers think more clearly about the fuel consumption of the vehicles they purchase. This was in response to research that shows that gallons-per-mile is a more effective means of getting drivers to appreciate the realities of fuel consumption than the traditional miles-per-gallon.

However, write Loewenstein and Ubel, "more and better information fails to get at the core of the problem: People drive large, energy-inefficient cars because gas is still relatively cheap. An increase in the gas tax that made the price of gas reflect its true costs would be a far more effective—though much more politically painful—way to reduce fuel consumption."

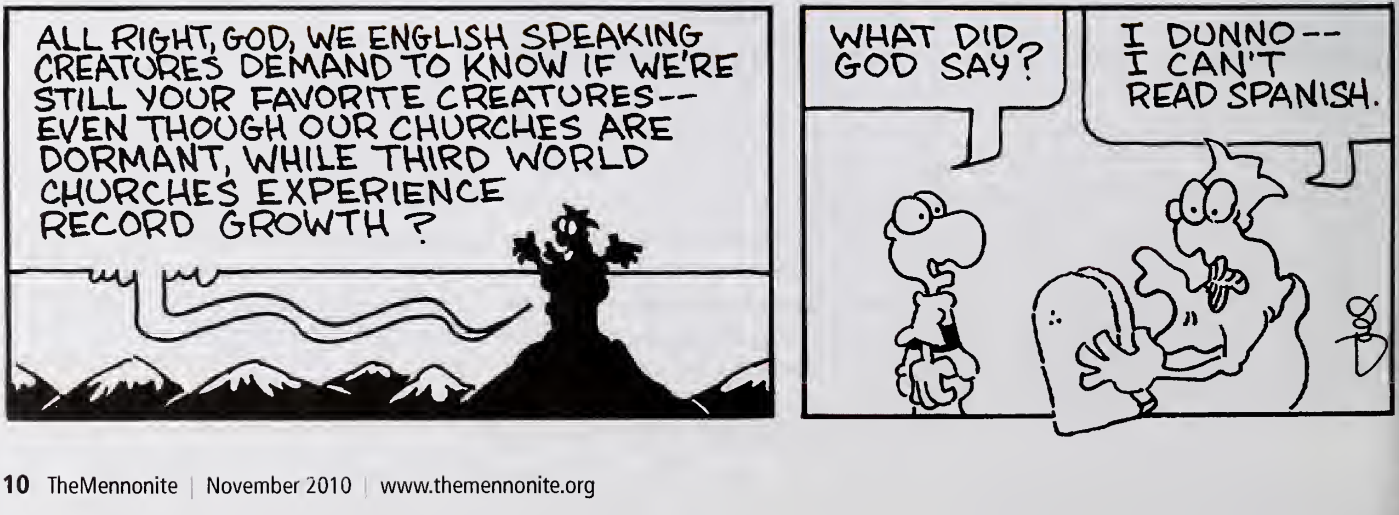
Great Britain, hoping to reduce electricity use, touted a study that reduced household electricity use by informing consumers of how their use compared to that of their neighbors. But tests of the program found that better information reduced energy use by only 1 to 2.5 percent.

"Compare that with the likely results of a solution rooted in traditional economics," write Loewenstein and Ubel: "A carbon tax would instantly bring the price of energy into line with its true cost and would unleash the creative power of the marketplace to generate cleaner energy sources."

Loewenstein and Ubel conclude: "For all of its insights, behavioral economics alone is not a viable alternative to the kinds of far-reaching policies we need to tackle our nation's challenges."—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


ALL RIGHT, GOD, WE ENGLISH SPEAKING CREATURES DEMAND TO KNOW IF WE'RE STILL YOUR FAVORITE CREATURES-- EVEN THOUGH OUR CHURCHES ARE DORMANT, WHILE THIRD WORLD CHURCHES EXPERIENCE RECORD GROWTH ?
WHAT DID GOD SAY?
I DUNNO-- I CAN'T READ SPANISH.

> “Too many Christians apprehend Jesus in a highly spiritualized way, ignoring the fact that he lived and died in times that were as contentious and conflicted as our own.” —*Ched Myers and Elaine Enns in* Ambassadors of Reconciliation: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking *(review, page 59)*

Heat waves, drought, floods, a hotter Earth

The summer's heat waves baked the eastern United States, parts of Africa and eastern Asia and Russia, which lost millions of acres of wheat and thousands of lives in a drought worse than any other in the historical record.

Is global warming causing more weather extremes? The collective answer of the scientific community can be boiled down to a single word: probably.

Thermometer measurements show that the earth has warmed by about 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit since the Industrial Revolution, when humans began pumping enormous amounts of carbon dioxide, a heat-trapping greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere.

Theory suggests that a world warming up because of those gases will feature heavier rainstorms in summer, bigger snowstorms in winter, more intense droughts in at least some places and more record-breaking heat waves. Scientists and government reports say the statistical evidence shows that much of this is starting to happen.—*New York Times*

Clean slate

Four simple steps to eliminate the tax man and save the country from suffocating debt:

1. Cut income- and payroll-tax rates by half, except for people earning more than $2 million a year, who will enjoy smaller cuts.

2. Eliminate all individual deductions and exemptions.

3. Impose a 12 to 15 percent value-added tax on consumption.

4. Individuals will no longer have to file tax returns with the IRS. All earned and investment income will be collected by withholding.—*Newsweek*

Why can't people stop smoking?

According to a study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Dr. Reuven Dar of Tel Aviv University's Department of Psychology, chemical addiction is not the problem with cigarettes. He concluded that the craving effect is produced by psychological cues rather than by the physiological effects of nicotine deprivation. Dr. Dar's studies say that nicotine does have a physiological role in increasing cognitive abilities, such as attention and memory, but it's not an addictive substance like heroin. He believes people who smoke do so for short-term benefits, such as oral gratification, sensory pleasure and social camaraderie.—*Spirituality & Health*

Religious knowledge

The average number of questions about religion in America answered correctly by different groups (out of 32 total):

Atheist/agnostic: 20.9
Jewish: 20.5
Mormon: 20.3
White evangelical Protestant: 17.6
White Catholic: 16.0
White mainline Protestant: 15.8
“Nothing in particular”: 15.2
Black Protestant: 13.4
Hispanic Catholic: 11.6

—*Religion News Service*

Israelites were beer drinkers

Ancient Israelites drank not only wine but also beer, according to a biblical scholar at Xavier University in Louisiana. “Ancient Israelites, with the possible exception of a few teetotaling Nazirites and their moms, proudly drank beer—and lots of it,” says Michael Homan, in the September/October issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.—*Religion News Service*

10 ways to solve jobs problem

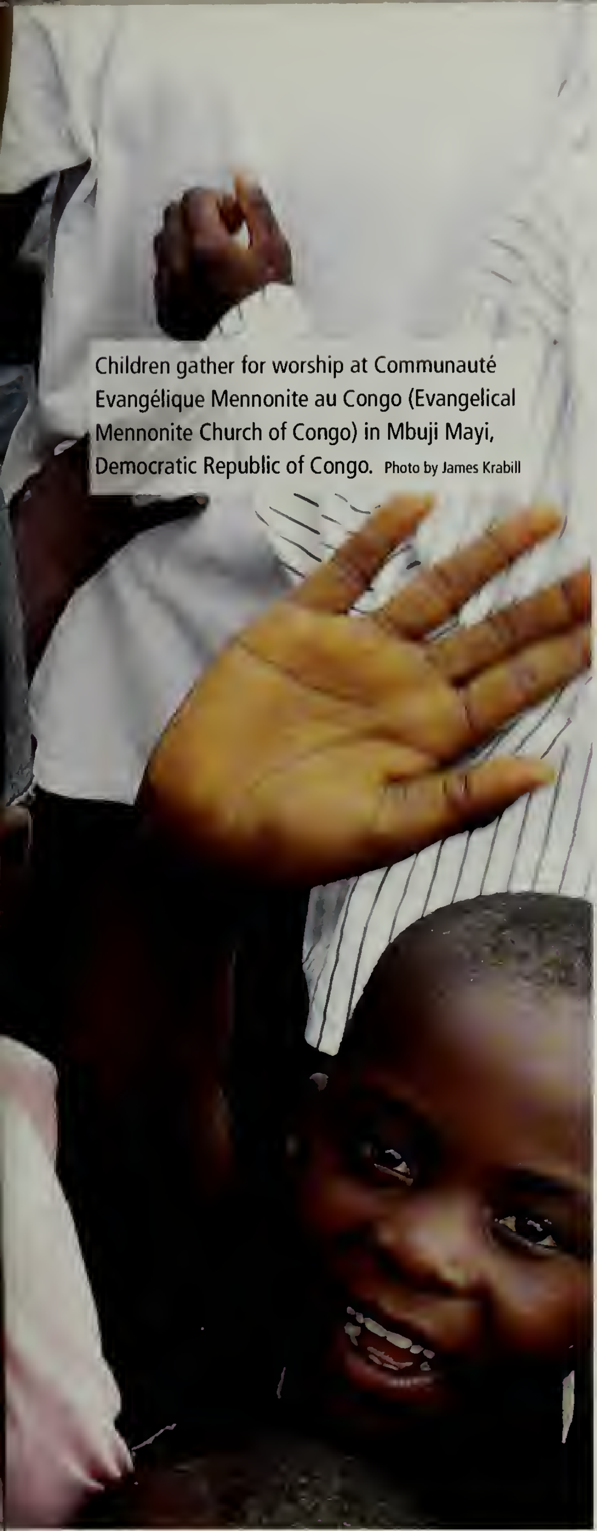
1. More farms, less agribusiness.
2. More repair, fewer products.
3. More recycling, less mining.
4. More renovations, less construction.
5. More restoration, less destruction.
6. More bike paths, fewer highways.
7. More local businesses, fewer megastores.
8. More dishwashing, fewer throwaways.
9. More education, less advertising.
10. More clean energy, less fossil fuel.

—*Fran Korten in* Yes! Magazine

The power of story

Oral history project celebrates Congolese evangelists' faith, courage.

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen



Children gather for worship at Communauté Evangélique Mennonite au Congo (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo) in Mbuji Mayi, Democratic Republic of Congo. Photo by James Krabill

Muyishi Mutangidiki, a Congolese Mennonite evangelist, struggled to turn his head from the direct fury of the sun. Bound hand and foot to a corpse, a torrent of taunts further paralyzed him.

"Have you felt his breath on the back of your neck yet?" jeered a chief of the Bashilele people, lounging in the relative coolness of palm trees with the village elders.

Mutangidiki's persecutors were struggling with the unfamiliar story of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The Bashilele people resisted conversation about Jesus, at first, and treated Mutangidiki with hostility, said David Lupera, the first ordained Mennonite of this ethnic group. Lupera recounted this historic event to Jim Bertsche, who served with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) in Congo for nearly three decades and as administrator in the United States from 1974-86.

> In Africa, we practice oral tradition, but those who know our story are in the process of leaving us. If this history is not written down now, we will lose the story.—Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga

Mennonite Mission Network actively collaborates with AIMM and Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Congo through the Partnership Council that includes three Congolese Mennonite denominations and representatives of the network of French-speaking Anabaptists. Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference have observer status in the Partnership Council.

In preparation of the centennial of Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Congo Mennonite Community) in 2012, AIMM has launched an oral history project that aspires to record the witness of early Mennonites in a Congolese version of *Martyrs' Mirror*. The timing of this endeavor is crucial, as important information has already been lost to the passage of the years, including the name of the evangelist who was tied to the dead man. (Muyishi Mutangidiki is a pseudonym composed of Congolese-language words for "teacher" and "evangelist," respectively.)

Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga, Congo Mennonite Community's president, spoke to the significance of the Congo history book project.

"We cannot stick the story of people living on earth in a drawer somewhere. In Africa, we practice oral tradition, but those who know our story are in the process of leaving us. If this history is not written down now, we will lose the story," Komuesa said.

Choir members from the Mennonite church in Kikwit, Democratic Republic of Congo, sing their welcome to Stanley Green during his visit to their congregation.

Photo by Stanley Green

The active phase of the story-gathering was launched with a workshop in Kinshasa, Congo's capital, in November 2009. Fohle Lygunda trained seven Congolese researchers in techniques for collecting and transcribing oral histories. Lygunda has a doctorate in mission and leadership from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky and is the director for French-speaking Africa with the Dictionary of African Christian Biography.

The villagers tied Mutangidiki, face up toward the sky, to the lifeless body, then retreated to the shade of the palm trees to await the resurrection.

For the past year, the oral history researchers, armed with digital recorders and notebooks, have been navigating their motorcycles along forest paths to remote villages to collect the histories that illustrate how Congolese Mennonite believers lived their faith over the last century. These stories bear witness to the dedication of women and men, laypeople and pastors, who through their actions and words lived their commitment to Christ in specific, often difficult circumstances.

AIMM plans to convert the oral histories into two published volumes of Congolese history, one in French and one in English, with the release date scheduled to coincide with the centennial celebration at Congo Mennonite Community's headquarters in Tshikapa in June 2012.

"We are going to make a lot of noise to celebrate these 100 years of Mennonite presence in Congo," Komuesa said. "This history doesn't only involve Congolese Mennonites; it also includes those Mennonites who brought the gospel to Congo."

AIMM, which is simultaneously marking its 100th anniversary as a mission agency, hopes that an additional benefit of stories like Mutangidiki's will be to encourage North American Mennonites to greater courage and faithfulness in living out their faith.

Mutangidiki learned to read and write in the Djoko Punda school established by Lawrence and Rose Haigh, the first workers with Congo Inland Mission, a predecessor agency of AIMM. Mutangidiki became a follower of Jesus and was trained as an evangelist, as were many of his classmates. By the late 1920s, Congolese evangelists had moved into villages around Djoko Punda to begin schools and clinics and plant churches.

According to Jim Bertsche—author of the history of the Mennonites in Congo from a North American perspective, *CIM/AIMM: A Story of Vi-*

sion, Commitment and Grace—after a decade of enlarging Christian presence around the mission center, there was a growing sense of urgency to reach out further to the Bashilele people, who were skilled in forging iron and hunting but had resisted all missionary overtures.

Mutangidiki and his wife said yes to God's call to live as evangelists among the Bashilele people. After sessions that met with stony indifference from the chief and elders, the Mutangidikis received grudging permission to build their house at the very edge of a Bashilele village.

"Will knowing about Jesus help us be able to smelt iron better than our ancestors?" the chief derisively asked Mutangidiki.

Uncharacteristically of African hospitality, the villagers did not help the Mutangidiki couple build their thatch-and-stick home, and they did not help the Mutangidikis plant their fields. Fortified by faith and undeterred by hostility, Muyishi Mutangidiki tied a piece of scrap metal to a tree branch and beat it with a rock every morning calling children to come and learn at the school, but no one appeared.

Every Sunday, the Mutangidikis went to the center of the village to sing praises to God and to talk about Yesu Musungidi wetu, Jesus, our Savior, but no one was interested.

One day, the chief summoned Muyishi Mutangidiki and said, "You keep telling us about someone named Jesus."

"That's true," Mutangidiki said.

"You tell us that he raised people from the dead while he was on earth."

"He did."

"You say that he himself died and rose from his grave three days later."

"He did."

"Well, we want to try this Jesus business here in our village today. Do you see that corpse over there? That man died last night."

The chief continued to explain that the village elders had decided that if Mutangidiki's Jesus could bring the corpse back to life, the whole village would become Christians with rejoicing. However, if the dead man didn't start breathing before sundown, when tradition dictated burial, Mutangidiki would be buried alive in the grave with the corpse.

The villagers tied Mutangidiki, face up toward the sky, to the lifeless body, then retreated to the shade of the palm trees to await the resurrection. Occasionally they called out to Mutangidiki, asking if there were any stirrings of life, any whisper of breath on the back of his neck.

The sun was low in the sky when a messenger boy burst into the assemblage, announcing the imminent arrival of a Belgian government official, an emissary of the colonizing power that held Congo in its grip.

The following morning, the villagers were astonished to hear the scrap-metal bell calling the children to school as usual.

The chief quickly ordered Mutangidiki to be cut free. In the commotion surrounding the Belgian's arrival, Mutangidiki slipped away to rejoin his praying wife. In the course of trading news with the chief, the Belgian asked the chief about Mutangidiki's school.

"Muyishi Mutangidiki is well," the chief replied. "In fact, he was here with us just a short while ago."

When the Belgian finished his business and left, the villagers joked about whether the Mutangidikis would leave that night or wait until daybreak to make their escape.

The following morning, the villagers were astonished to hear the scrap-metal bell calling the children to school as usual.

At the sound of the bell, the young boy, Lupera, turned to his group of friends and said, "If those evangelists are still here in the village after the way our fathers tortured them yesterday, they must have something important to tell us. I'm going to find out what it is."

And with those steps toward Mutangidiki's classroom, Lupera began the journey that took him into leadership positions in the Congolese Mennonite churches that today have 125,000 members and manage eight hospitals, a Bible institute, several hundred elementary and secondary schools, a sawmill and a variety of development projects. The Congolese Mennonites also participate with other denominations in the administration of the Université Chrétienne de Kinshasa (Kinshasa Christian University).

Lynda Hollinger-Janzen writes for Mennonite Mission Network.

SPECIAL SECTION

Mennonite Mission Network

Learning another's song

Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church grows into a diverse group that worships and works together.

By DeVonna R. Allison

Members of Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church during a baptism service (from left) Samuel Peterschmitt (from India), Viliene Luma (from Haiti), Karene Boukono (of France) and Julie Girard (of France)
Photo by Frédéric Girard

When Isabelle Deler, then a recent immigrant to France from the Caribbean island of St. Martin, first walked into the Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church, she finally felt at home.

Having recently moved to Paris for university, she felt distant from the people, food and traditions of her home. But Châtenay Malabry, with congregants from Haiti, Congo, Madagascar, Ukraine, Vietnam and many other countries, reminded her of the diversity of St. Martin. When she finally moved out of the neighborhood, she says, she didn't want to change churches.

"I was afraid of not finding another community like Châtenay," she says.

The church, located in the Paris suburb of Châtenay Malabry, was once comprised mostly of white, middle-class, native-born French people. But congregants have worked hard to adapt to their neighborhood's changing demographics in a country that has made headlines for the clashes that have erupted between the country's 6.8 million immigrants and the native French population.

In the fall of 2005, youth from immigrant communities in France, frustrated by a lack of economic opportunities, rioted for 20 nights, leading to almost 3,000 arrests. This summer the French legislature banned the wearing of facial veils in public, a law that affected mostly immigrant women from Islamic traditions. And even as the public debated the legitimacy of the clothing ban, French authorities were rounding up thousands of undocumented Roma [Gypsy] immigrants and forcibly returning them to their home countries.

These reports do not tell the whole story, however. There are places in France where communities of faith work toward embracing their immigrant neighbors and traditions through inclusive worship. These communities of faith are what Neal Blough describes as "true peace churches."

Blough and his wife, Janie Blough, are Mennonite Mission Network workers who have lived in France for 35 years and attend Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church.

"Mennonite peace theology is fulfilled when people who would not ordinarily interact choose to come together and form a community. It is the fulfillment of the gospel," says Blough. "A fully integrated church fulfills the scriptural teaching that we are all one in Christ Jesus."

Making a home

When immigrants arrive in a new country, they often settle collectively, creating satellite neighborhoods in the suburbs of large cities. These immigrant communities become places where the faces, languages and foods remind residents of their homelands while providing them with a safe place to interact with and support one another. And for many of the newcomers, an important part of communal connection is finding a place to worship.

Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church is located in one of these satellite immigrant neighborhoods. According to Neal, as more and more immigrants began calling the neighborhood home, Châtenay Malabry Mennonite's membership began to reflect these demographic changes.

"The reaction at first [to the influx of immigrants] was one of caution," says Neal. Since most of the immigrants came from former French colonies and had lived in France for a number of years, language was not the issue. The different styles of worship, prayer and faith traditions, however, took time to adjust to.

"Many of the church's immigrant members were used to a more physical, charismatic style of worship," Neal says. "People had to learn to accept different forms of spirituality and expression that were not familiar to them."

Breakthrough moment

One of the first ways members of the church connected was through sharing prayer concerns during worship. Prayers for housing and jobs or for sick or absent family members were simple concerns all church members could relate to.

"As [members] heard the needs and concerns, of their fellow church members," Neal says, "they began to sympathize with them, and their eyes were opened to the larger issues immigrants face."

The church wasn't merely moved to sympathy; it was moved to action. People came forward with offers to help find housing or jobs or to offer assistance with official paperwork. Sharing prayer concerns opened doors to conversation. Understanding one another's needs was a first step toward building relationships.

Worship

Janie is pursing a doctorate degree in worship studies and teaches worship in various settings while also serving as one of Châtenay Malabry's worship leaders. As changes began taking place within the congregation, she made an all-inclusive worship experience her personal goal. She also strives to educate worship leaders to the importance

Members of a youth catechism class at Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church
Photo by Alexandre Nussbaumer

Members of a choir representing three French Mennonite congregations
Photo by Julio Rakotonindriana

of this goal in the classes she teaches.

“Worship is the ‘work’ of the congregation,” Janie says. “This means that members from different origins need to be present and up front, through Scripture reading, sharing prayer concerns, participating in moments of spontaneous prayer, distributing the bread and wine. Worship should represent the different cultures and spiritualities within the congregation.”

Congregants have worked hard to adapt to their neighborhood’s changing demographics in a country where clashes erupted between the country’s 6.8 million immigrants and the native French population.

Leadership

“One mistake some churches make in [integration] is that the changes don’t extend to the decision-making process, and leadership remains the same,” Neal says.

A year ago, three longtime members of Châtenay Malabry’s church council stepped down from leadership in order to make way for new leaders. As a result, the church council now includes Isabelle Deler, Geneviève Boukono from Congo, and Julio Rakontonindriana from Madagascar. A variety of voices, representing the many different peoples and views of the congregation, now participate in congregational discussions and decisions.

Working together

The results of the church’s efforts to work toward integration were evident in their response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January. News of the tragedy echoed across the airwaves and reverberated through the community’s immigrant neighborhoods. And in the Châtenay neighborhood, the shock of the event led to action.

“During the period following the earthquake in Haiti, the events became more real for our congregation because our Haitian members gave specific prayer requests for their friends and family in Haiti,” says Neal.

A special prayer service was organized at Châtenay Malabry Mennonite to lend support to the nearby Haitian immigrant community and to lift up the people of Haiti. Alexandre Nussbaumer, pastor of Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church, initiated an interdenominational benefit concert that raised over $4,000 U.S. The funds were shared between two church-related organizations in Haiti for use in relief efforts. In the months that followed, Haitians in the congregation continued requesting prayer and provided updates on friends and family members living in Haiti.

Extending a hand

Christian immigrants in some neighborhoods, seeing the frustrations evidenced by the riots of 2005, have made it a priority to provide assistance to other immigrants. Mirroring the help they received from their own churches, they now extend offers of help to all, including their Muslim neighbors.

These neighborhoods, Neal says, “are some of the few places where you will see Christians and Muslims living and working together in a real spirit of cooperation.”

Looking forward

Immigrant Christians have brought vitality and growth to what was once a small group of believers at Châtenay Malabry Mennonite. The church now hosts monthly multicultural potlucks and annual church retreats to help build relationships within the church and encourage self-understanding. The church invites immigrant preachers to address the congregation, hosts women’s groups and house groups, holds multicultural prayer meetings and ecumenical activities in addition to joint worship services with other Parisian Mennonites.

For Isabelle Deler, Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church is a testament to the gospel’s transformative power.

“Being part of a [culturally] mixed church,” Deler says, “is a good way for me to show to the whole world that we can live together on this planet without fighting each other.”

DeVonna R. Allison writes for Mennonite Mission Network.

Dwell draws young adults to Atlanta, where they learn to work and live together.

By Melanie Hess

When Joel and Leslie Gerber said they were thinking about a service term, they got some funny looks. They weren't typical service workers; they were a young married couple with a child and full-time jobs in rural Kansas—not young adults fresh out of college or retirees with time on their hands.

But the strange looks were few and far between compared with the outpouring of community support for their plan. When the Gerbers decided to serve with Dwell, a partnership program of Mennonite Mission Network and Presbyterian Church USA, their congregation, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, was full of encouragement.

"Some fellow church members have been instrumental in encouraging me in this direction and I would not [have applied] if it wasn't for them," says Joel.

▶

YOUNG ADULTS dwell together

Members of the Dwell houses in Atlanta: back row: Joel Gerber, Cassie Ford, Steve Andrews, Kari Pellegrino, Tommy Flynn, Alan Jenkins; middle row: Cora Gerber, Leslie Gerber, Megan Warley, Myra Miller, Sonya Chelliah; front: Sarah Bellacicco, Ed Amos

Mennonite Mission Network photo

Dwell is a part of DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection), a program that began in Denver and came out of a desire to "see the face of God in the city" by helping people see how God is at work in urban areas around the country.

There are two ways to enter the Dwell program; one is to come to the city for a year or two of service and life in community. But Dwell also encourages local young adults, who often have more traditional jobs, to come live with the service workers in intentional Christian community as "tentmakers" in their own backyards. Residents of Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Hollywood, Miami and San Antonio have the opportunity to live in community through Dwell.

Dwell came out of a desire to "see the face of God in the city" by helping people see how God is at work in urban areas around the country.

Coming to the city

Joel and Leslie and their 11-month-old daughter, Cora, moved into Dwell's Capitol View house and began their term of service in early September.

Joel and Leslie were both teachers in Harper, Kan., but the desire for a change prompted Joel to think seriously about service, something he'd been considering for years. He convinced Leslie to apply to international and U.S. service programs, even as they looked for other job opportunities. In the end, the fact that they had a small daughter and a second child on the way narrowed their possibilities considerably. But the Capitol View house in Atlanta had room for a family.

"It was a good time for us—we had already missed our opportunity to do service straight out of college, but it was something that Joel had always wanted to do," says Leslie. "We said, 'Cora's not in school yet, so let's take this opportunity to go now before we need to stay in one place.' "

The community made a difference for the Gerbers—it was their church family who helped make service seem like a real possibility.

"A lot of people from our church have done service for many, many years, most of Joel's family has done service, and there are three others my age who are doing international or U.S. service for multiple years. It's just something they do," says Leslie. "When we mentioned making a job change, people came to us and said, 'Why don't you think about doing service.' I think that's maybe what put the bug in our ear to apply. There are so many people that have done it and have had great experiences."

The Gerbers continue to get support from the members of Pleasant View—in the form of encouraging e-mails and financial gifts, since Dwell program members raise part of their own support.

As for their service placements, Leslie works for Neighbors' Abbey, a church in their neighborhood where she does administrative work and works with a mentoring program at a local middle school. She helps with a life skills class for middle-school girls and also helps match them with mentors from their own community.

Joel works at a homeless men's shelter and as a "gardener in residence" at a charter school. His farming background allows him to share his knowledge about growing food and composting with children who haven't had experience with agriculture. Recently he spent an afternoon pulling weeds with kindergarten-age boys.

Their new community living situation is a change for the Gerbers, who've spent the past three years living in a farmhouse in "the middle of nowhere." But the practical aspects of their community living—not having to cook every night, not having an entire house to clean and readily available babysitters—are a benefit, says Leslie.

They're also taking advantage of life in the city, an adjustment that hasn't been as difficult as they expected. "Living right in the middle of the neighborhood is a great way to meet people," says Leslie. And being within walking distance of some of Atlanta's many parks helps them find inexpensive and fun things to do with their daughter.

Finding life in community

Tommy Flynn represents the other way to serve through Dwell. He is a long-term resident of Atlanta and a nurse who has lived in the Grant Park house for the past two years.

"The local young adults are the anchors," says Jannan Thomas, DOOR Atlanta's city director. "They're here for multiple years and they're able to really build relationships and provide consistency."

After a few years in more formal church ministry, Flynn was looking for a way to live his faith in a different way. He was interested in the community and connection that Dwell could provide.

When we mentioned making a job change, people came to us and said, 'Why don't you think about doing service.'—Leslie Gerber

"I really felt a lack of fulfillment in the strict Christian 'systems' we have offered to us from the church," says Flynn. "There are small groups, Sunday school and service opportunities, but barring certain extremes like long-term mission, you don't really get many opportunities to live your faith day in and day out and struggle through some of the really hard questions that come along with it."

For Dwell house members in Atlanta, living together intentionally is an important part of their spiritual and intellectual growth.

"We meet every week for dinner and discussion, whatever falls on that night," Flynn says. "We also have nights for celebrating things like Advent, exploring different Christian practices and learning about social issues like gentrification, racism, the sex trade, poverty, hunger and our response to them."

When Flynn first joined the house in 2008, community questions revolved around chores and logistics—the basics of setting up a household. As time went on, Flynn says, they had to deal with more intense conflicts and questions.

"Conflict is one of the key elements of living in community—it's easy to avoid unless you're actually living together," says Flynn. "You either stop talking to each other or deal with it somehow. It's pushed everyone in the community to work with others in love and understand others better."

Every year there are new Dwell participants. "Turnover every year changes the feel of the house, because everyone brings their own contribution, personality and vision," says Flynn. "Every year we take a different direction and get new energy."

The community also serves as support as members go out to their jobs or service placements, giving encouragement and strengthening each other.

"The communities serve as families, even though they're not biologically related," says Thomas. "It's amazing to see just how supportive they are of one another and how they can be brothers and sisters in Christ to one another."

In Atlanta, those who come for a service term are placed through connections with the Presbyterian Church, but there's also a strong connection with Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, which owns the Dwell house in Grant Park. Dwell members were living in the Grant Park house with others when the house was known simply as AMF's hospitality house. When AMF revisited the mission of the house, they saw that the Dwell vision fit their hopes for what the house would be, says Thomas, and Dwell and AMF decided to work together.

"We're part of the ministry that AMF has in the city, through their house," Thomas says. "So we like for the church to be involved in things that happen in the house—game nights and music nights—informal connections that we try to keep open." In addition to inviting AMF members to be a part of their hospitality nights, some of the Dwellers go work on the farm connected with the church.

Conflict is one of the key elements of living in community—it's easy to avoid unless you're actually living together.—Tommy Flynn

Flynn says the lessons he's learned from living in community are going to remain with him for the rest of his life: communication skills, leadership and care for others.

"I'm going to take with me a more profound ability to love more people, perhaps all people, because we're put in this house together—we don't pick each other," he says. "God picks us and we just end up together. We have to learn how to love people we don't normally have to relate to."

Melanie Hess writes for Mennonite Mission Network.

MISSION AS A FORM OF exoticism

By Leo Hartshorn

After 29 years in various pastoral roles in the U.S. context, I found myself working as a minister of peace and justice for a mission agency located in the global mission division. In this new role I felt I needed to upgrade my knowledge of mission and did some cursory reading. And although my primary area of responsibility was in peace and justice, I also needed to look at my work and the church through a missional lens. By missional I refer to the church as being sent by God in all aspects of its life and to all dimensions of the world.

The church was entranced by images, artifacts and stories brought back by the missionaries they had sent to exotic lands.

Among the many things I learned about becoming missional was that this new vision of mission went beyond the old mission paradigm of sending missionaries to convert pagans in the non-Western world. A clear understanding of the increasing secularization of our North American context made where we live as much a mission field as any other place in the global village. I noticed in my reading an emphasis being placed upon mission within one's own cultural context. Also, in the missional vision the local setting of the congregation received a renewed focus for mission.

I looked at our denomination, congregations, mission agency, and peace and justice work through a missional lens. I noticed certain tendencies within the church toward what I call exoticism. In the 19th century, exoticism, particularly in art and music, was expressed as the "charm of the unfamiliar," a fascination with anything foreign and "other." The expanding Western missionary movement during this same period was not immune from the virus of exoticism. The wider culture caught the exoticism bug, and the church sneezed. The church was entranced by images, artifacts and stories brought back by the missionaries they had sent to exotic lands. Mission had to do with being sent to other places than our own.

There is an almost natural fascination with the unfamiliar and exotic, which is understandable. Who doesn't like to travel to other countries and explore their histories, customs and cultures? But I observed in our church some tendencies that express and reinforce an exoticism that seems to hinder mission understood and practiced more fully in its national and local contexts.

A prevailing understanding of mission among individuals and congregations tends to place financially supporting global mission work over practicing local mission work. If we think about mission in our congregations primarily in terms of the visiting missionary with slides from a foreign land who shows artifacts and shares insights from another language, or the offering we took to support our favorite mission agency, as wonderful as that is, or point to the postcard from the couple from our congregation more than how our congregation is practicing mission in our local context, we are probably engaging in mission as a form of exoticism.

Sometimes exoticism expresses itself in the high level of admiration for and preference given to people, specifically white people, with experience in another country compared with those who have ministered in the U.S. context. Racial/ethnic people share stories around the church water cooler about the church's tendency to give re-

Do we give more attention and support to more exotic mission work overseas and neglect our U.S. and local context?

spect and preference for white people and their work in other countries compared with the respect they would like to see for their leaders and work in urban contexts in the United States that should be considered models of being missional.

Has the church significantly involved racial/ethnic leaders and congregations, who are engaged in missional practice in North America, in telling their stories and sharing their knowledge and expertise with the wider church as much as we have utilized white "professional" missionaries we have sent to other countries? If not, doesn't this reinforce engagement in mission as a form of exoticism?

Certain mission practices give clear evidence of this tendency. For example, the church has a longstanding practice of sending white missionaries to other countries while rarely sending people of color in the United States who are from those countries and cultures. How many of our missionaries are people indigenous to the countries they are sent to? And even though there have been efforts to place mission work in the hands of the indigenous people, the U.S. church has no comprehensive, long-term process for a full transference of power, decision making, leadership and resources to indigenous people in the countries where we send predominantly white, North American missionaries.

If the missional agenda with its renewed emphasis on the contextual and local is a priority, it would seem the mission of the church in regional, congregational, rural and urban settings would also be a priority of the church. In rural contexts the missional agenda calls for an understanding and practice that fits with the ethnic and racial diversity that now exists in the rural setting. Exoticism seems to be reinforced by our denomination's and mission agencies' inability to maintain a strong, wide-ranging urban agenda, while there is strong support for international mission work. I'm not speaking about the work of conferences, which support local congregations in mission and ministry in local and regional contexts. In spite of the fact that the church is becoming more and more urban, the urban agenda has struggled to have vital, comprehensive and adequately financed support in the denominational structure.

Our church's strongest and best-supported urban work has been providing short-term opportunities for predominantly white children of our congregations. A more comprehensive urban agenda would involve urban theological education, church development, church planting, urban networking, social ministry support, training of urban leaders and congregations, creating and supporting multicultural congregations. In the 1970s, Latinos started a theological education project in San Antonio, Texas, that was not fully supported by white Mennonite leadership. More recent efforts have also struggled to find support.

Mennonites have had a long practice of peacemaking dominated by an agenda of addressing wars in foreign places over U.S. justice issues.

Even my work in peace and justice was not immune to a form of exoticism. Mennonites have had a long practice of peacemaking dominated by an agenda of addressing wars in foreign places over U.S. justice issues. Is not peacemaking that directs its primary energies and resources toward wars on foreign soil a form of exoticism? Again, peacemaking focused on wars in other countries and contexts has not always drawn in racial/ethnic people in that it has not been relevant to the U.S. urban context of gang, school and inner-city violence, handgun proliferation, racism, discrimination, economic injustice and issues related to racial/ethnic veterans. Peacemaking that neglects a more comprehensive understanding of shalom that includes personal, familial, interpersonal and local contexts and that works for justice within the United States is probably being seduced by some kind of exoticism.

I recognize that within a global context the United States has greater wealth and resources to share in mission than do many other countries. So why wouldn't the global mission work need greater support and resources than our own national and local missional work? This economic reality may answer some questions about what may be an imbalance between our global and domestic mission agendas, but it does not address other issues: for example, where the power and decision making is located for mission work.

These observations are not meant to simply denigrate traditional global missions or say the missional agenda in national and local contexts has been absent from the church and its mission agencies. There is much good work being done. They rather point to the continuing need to reform the church's mission and correct the imbalances that tend to downplay or neglect our own context as a mission field.

In conclusion, let me offer some signposts along the missional journey that indicate when mission is moving away from exoticism toward a renewed emphasis on the domestic and local:

1. When white North American congregations see their own local context as much a mission field as mission work in another country.
2. When members of white North American congregations see themselves as missionaries.
3. When support for and the practice of mission work has to do as much with mission in local contexts as it does with work in global contexts.
4. When whites engaging in mission in the U.S. context become as well informed about issues of culture, abuse of power, the messiness, contradictions and blessings of working with U.S. racial/ethnic groups as they are in doing their work as global missionaries.
5. When racial/ethnic people already doing missional work in domestic contexts are given the voice, respect, support and venues for sharing their stories and learnings with the wider church as those who have traveled to do mission work in global contexts.
6. When peacemaking is wed to justice, the global is local and the local is essential.
7. When our larger and longer vision of global mission moves us toward fully relinquishing power and control of global mission work into the hands of indigenous leaders and people where we send missionaries.

Leo Hartshorn is an artist, drummer for peace and (Ana)baptist theological educator in Portland, Ore.

Give us Homes.

When peacemaking is wed to justice, the global is local and the local is essential.

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF Mennonite youth ministry

2010 Goshen College Camping Inquiry Program (CIP) participant Emily Bowman, Camp Squeah, Hope, British Columbia
Photo provided

A look at 120 years of Mennonite youth ministry and what's ahead

By Bob Yoder

A common response I heard when researching the history of Mennonite youth ministry was, "I didn't know Mennonites had one." I learned that the Mennonite church has paid considerable attention to youth. But what can we learn from our history as we seek to faithfully follow Jesus?

Three common threads stand out. First, the tension between what youth want and what adult church leaders think is best for them persists. Second, I struggle to identify a "Mennonite model" of youth ministry since we have borrowed much. Third, though our denominational efforts have been abundant, we are only as effective as what the congregation enables to nurture faith.

1885-1940

Congregational-based initiatives by young people were met with adult church leaders who hindered or controlled these efforts. Young People's Bible Meetings (YPBMs) gained momentum in the Mennonite Church (MC) from 1890 to 1910. Outside Sunday school, this was perhaps the most readily accepted activity for young people who desired to gather in homes for Bible study and fellowship. These meetings, however, evolved to incorporate the entire congregation supported by denominational resources. In the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Christian Endeavor Sunday evening meetings were similar.

The next influential youth activity was the Literary Society. At first there was disapproval among church leaders, since these were not started by the church and were more social in nature. But by 1940, most conferences accepted them as legitimate youth activities. With the increasing intergenerational and institutional nature of YPBM, the Literaries became the place where young people could experience life with each other without the presence of controlling adults.

> Though our denominational efforts have been abundant, we are only as effective as what the congregation enables to nurture faith.

These grassroots efforts influenced denominational approaches to youth ministry. In 1921, the Young People's Problems Committee (YPPC) of the MC was formed to examine the problems and religious life of Mennonite young people ages 15 to 27. The YPPC sponsored a four-day Young People's Institute (YPIs) in 1927 on the campus of Goshen (Ind.) College. Though youth were not directly involved in its planning, they had positively influenced certain decisions. Eventually, the YPPC discontinued direct sponsorship of the YPIs but empowered regional conferences to plan their own events before phasing out due to the growth of Mennonite camping. Similarly, the GCs organized the first nine-day Young People's Retreat (YPR) at Bluffton (Ohio) College in 1925, along with subsequent regional events springing up including the first churchwide YPR held in conjunction with the GC session in 1935. The YPRs and

▶

YPIs served as important socializing efforts in Mennonite faith and identity and enabled young people to experience God through time away from home, fellowship with other youth and engaging dynamic speakers, worship and discussion topics.

At the congregational level, voices called for churches to holistically integrate youth ministry into the life of the church.

1940-1968

Denominational efforts to influence the faith of young people epitomized this era during a time of war and the emerging "teenage culture." Young People's Union (YPU) began in 1941 to support local youth ministry efforts in GC churches by giving guidance to the plethora of congregational activities already offered. All young people between the ages of 12 and 30 were considered members. YPU included executive officers, cabinet, annual council of district and institutional representatives, and conference-wide retreats and workshops.

Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) officially started in 1948, though it was an action by the MC General Conference in 1947 that authorized its formation and appointed the first interim council. Since Literaries received criticism as one-dimensional social gatherings, the MYF touted a holistic program around the areas of Faith and Practice, Fellowship and Service. Though MYF was not embraced by every conference, it was organized at the national, regional and local levels with annual delegate conventions for executive officers of each branch to gather for instruction and exhortation. The national MYF Cabinet dissolved in 1968 due to denominational restructuring and realignment of youth ministry oversight.

Two other youth ministry movements deserve mentioning: Mennonite camps and high schools. Stemming from the recent success of YPRs and YPIs, Camp Men-O-Lan (GC) and Laurelville Mennonite Camp (MC) began in 1941 and 1943, respectively, as their denominations' first camps. Over the next 40 years, 41 MC-affiliated camps and 18 GC-affiliated camps developed. Some started with the intent of nurturing the children and youth of the church, but others had a more evangelistic focus. Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School began in 1942. Though there had been a few Mennonite academies established prior to this date, this was the first of a dozen Mennonite high schools to open in the next 15 years. These schools promoted a particular set of values, beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle expectations uniquely Mennonite.

2010 Goshen College Ministry Inquiry Program participant Maggie Gilman (third from right) with youth from Portland Mennonite Church.
Photo provided

1968-present

This third era is characterized by both a continuation of denominational efforts and by congregational self-direction. Conference youth ministers and denominational staff comprised the newly formed Youth Ministry Council (YMC), whose primary focus was to resource paid conference staff. However, not all conferences were able to afford such staff. The churchwide youth conventions grew, but unlike the MYF delegate conventions of the 1950s and 1960s, these gatherings were intended for high school youth and the entire youth group. The five-day mass sessions provided opportunities for young people to experience God during worship, seminars, service assignments and fellowship.

At the congregational level, voices called for churches to holistically integrate youth ministry into the life of the church. A denominational staff person wrote that youth ministry had been under fire in many congregations from parents who hurt when their children lost interest in church activities and from youth sponsors unwilling to serve more than one term. Other sources of entertainment competed with the youth group, the youth program became a parallel congregation separate from the adult congregation, and fewer and fewer adults were interested in serving as youth group sponsors. To respond to these challenges, Blueprint for Congregational Youth Ministry, a project of the Church of the Brethren, General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, was published in 1988 and encouraged an integrated organizational structure.

Another reality has been the professionalization of youth ministry. A trend to hire paid youth pastors had increased among churches who could afford multistaffing, and by the early 2000s all our Mennonite colleges and seminaries offered courses in youth ministry. An increase in credentialing such pastors raised the pastoral and theological expectations of these leaders. However, numerous conferences had cut funding for youth ministry staff throughout the 1990s, and perhaps the low point of this trend occurred in 2003, when the denominational youth ministry position of Mennonite Church USA was eliminated.

Even though significant denominational resources have been exerted, local leaders were responsible for congregational efforts. Sometimes leaders gravitated toward experiential activities that interested them, excited the youth or were convenient to attend rather than always theologically consider the nature of faith championed by these activities. The 1970s saw the rise of entrepreneurial, nondenominational publishing efforts from Youth Specialties and Group Publishing. These energies touted a more "generic, bottom-line" form of Christianity and offered "cut-and-paste" activities to help busy youth leaders. As these businesses grew, so did their influence on youth ministry.

Future considerations

As I consider the future of Mennonite youth ministry, I believe we need to be theologically intentional and reflectively informed in all that we do, no matter the programmatic effort we employ. Life is busy and full of choices, and we dare not be theologically lazy. Will we as leaders and parents have the guts to discern what activities should comprise our youth's time as we also examine our own lives?

We need to listen to the cries of all our youth, not just the ones who engage our denominational efforts.

Our denomination is positioned well to support the faith-nurturing efforts of our youth, but this must be done in a collaborative posture. Our church is multifaceted, so we dare not put all our eggs into one basket. Will the various faith-shaping institutions work together to wrestle with today's challenges, or will we compete for the attention of our youth and youth leaders?

We need to listen to the cries of all our youth, not just the ones who engage our denominational efforts. The North American Mennonite church is changing, and we need to be attuned to all its voices, not just the ones who have paid adult leaders guiding the way. Will we listen to the underrepresented and actively pay attention to the diverse places the Holy Spirit is at work?

The challenges faced in youth ministry are no different from what the broader church confronts. If we as a church are properly attuned to the changing world around us and faithfully respond as Jesus would—and involve our youth in that process—then I am confident their faith will positively grow. Will we have the courage to put aside some of the generational bickering and get on with the mission of God?

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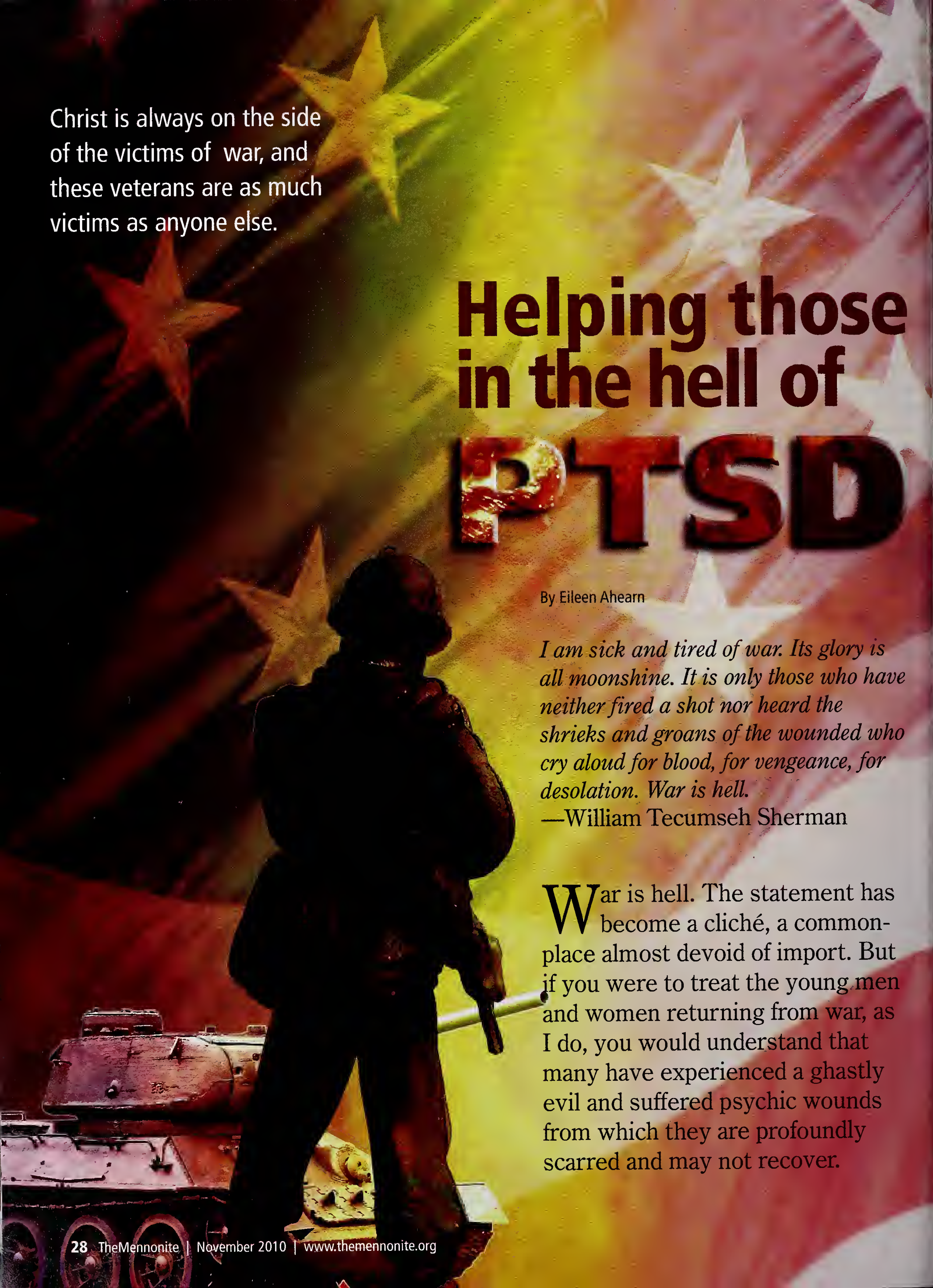

Christ is always on the side of the victims of war, and these veterans are as much victims as anyone else.

Helping those in the hell of PTSD

By Eileen Ahearn

I am sick and tired of war. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, for vengeance, for desolation. War is hell.
—William Tecumseh Sherman

War is hell. The statement has become a cliché, a commonplace almost devoid of import. But if you were to treat the young men and women returning from war, as I do, you would understand that many have experienced a ghastly evil and suffered psychic wounds from which they are profoundly scarred and may not recover.

Mennonites should become involved with and assist veterans.

I am a psychiatrist working in a VA (Veterans Administration) hospital. I am also a Mennonite committed to nonviolence. I see no contradiction in this and find the convergence of these two identities satisfying, even necessary. Christ is always on the side of the victims of war, and these veterans are as much victims as anyone else.

The rates of mental health issues in our returning veterans as well as the need for ongoing care are staggering. More than 1.6 million U.S. troops have been deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001. Approximately 25 percent of returning veterans meet criteria for a mental health disorder. The RAND Study (see box, page 30, #1) found that 14 percent of returning veterans screen positive for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and 14 percent screen positive for major depression. Due to its high rate of occurrence, PTSD has been named a "signature injury" of the war in Iraq.

The violence of war can cripple the human psyche. PTSD, first used as a term to describe the psychological difficulties of returning Vietnam soldiers, often has disabling and enduring symptoms. People with PTSD must have had exposure to a life-threatening event and re-experience that event through distressing daytime memories, flashbacks and haunting nightmares. They are agitated and extremely watchful in public. High irritability and outbursts of anger are common, particularly in combat-induced PTSD. Avoidance of thoughts and feelings associated with the trauma is significant. These individuals feel emotionally disconnected from loved ones and often have a pervasive mistrust of people in general. If this is not bad enough, nearly three-quarters of people with PTSD have at least one other psychiatric diagnosis, and a significant number have at least three other comorbid diagnoses (see box, #2). The personal costs of war-related injury to veterans and their families can be lifelong. Divorce, joblessness, economic hardship, substance abuse and increased suicide risk are all troubling byproducts of PTSD. The cost of providing medical care and long-term disability benefits to returning veterans is equally shocking, with recent total health-care estimates of $424 billion (see box, #3).

Why should Mennonites involve themselves in the effort to help returning veterans? After all, the United States has an all-volunteer military. People enlist knowing they may be in risky or dangerous situations. They also know they may be called upon to injure or perhaps kill another human being. Have these people not embraced violence and brought all this upon themselves?

Consider why young people enlist. Studies have shown that the propensity to serve has been declining among youth in the United States over the last two decades. In one study, only 30 percent of first-term soldiers knew during their high school years that they wanted to join the military. This group is identified in the literature as having a "high propensity" for military service and tends to join the military out of a sense of patriotism, a desire to serve and a desire for adventure and challenge. The majority of current first-term soldiers seem to fall into the "low propensity" group and cite occupational and monetary reasons for joining. In one study (see box, #4), the majority of soldiers endorsed reasons such as "best option available," "repay college loans" or "lack of better options" as their explanation for joining. Therefore, the majority of today's volunteer military enlists for financial and occupational reasons, not a predilection toward violence.

We are creating a new generation of young men and women who have killed people and can barely live with themselves as a result.

But how, a Mennonite may ask, can soldiers bring themselves to kill another human being, even an enemy? S.L.A. Marshall, in his book *Men Against Fire* (see box, #5), wrote: "It is … reasonable to believe that the average and healthy individual—the man who can endure the mental and physical stresses of combat—still has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance toward killing a fellow man that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility. … At the vital point he becomes a conscientious objector."

People have a high resistance to killing. It is not a natural response to threat and is anathema to most people. Historically, soldiers in battle have not fired their weapons. In World War II, for example, Marshall's study showed a firing rate of only 25 percent. This "lack of enthusiasm" for killing the enemy is a well-known phenomenon and represents a powerful force, perhaps with moral, psychological and even spiritual roots. Unfortunately, the military eagerly adopted Marshall's suggestions for changing infantry training to remedy the low firing rate, resulting in increased firing rates in the Korean War (55 percent) and in the Vietnam War (up to 90 percent). At their core, most soldiers do not want to kill anyone. It is their military training or indoctrination that modulates their natural inclinations and lowers this resistance.

As witnesses for peace, we must recognize the devastating effects of war and reach out to those who suffer during war, including veterans.

Although the military may be more effective at training soldiers to fire at the enemy, they have been unable to eliminate the moral and psychologic consequences of killing. In my practice, I have treated hundreds of veterans with PTSD caused by killing another human being or witnessing the death of a fellow soldier, "enemy combatant" or civilian. I am still treating World War II and Vietnam veterans who weep uncontrollably when they recount taking a life. We are creating a new generation of young men and women who have killed people and can barely live with themselves as a result.

In her recent essay, Nancy Sherman (see box, #6) interviewed dozens of soldiers who talked about wanting to process the loss of what they had done or experienced in war. She writes, "They wanted to register the complex inner moral landscape of war by finding some measure of empathy with their own emotions."

These soldiers are deeply troubled by what they have seen and done in combat.

Civilian deaths are particularly haunting. One soldier recounted firing shots at a car that accelerated toward a security checkpoint in Iraq. Soldiers at these checkpoints must make instantaneous decisions as to whether to fire on vehicles that fail to yield, because of the constant threat of suicide bombers who will blow themselves up as they drive through a checkpoint. One can only imagine that soldier's horror when he opened the car door to discover the torn bodies of a young child and his father.

Witnessing the death of another soldier is also harrowing. I have heard countless stories of soldiers watching while fellow soldiers get killed or maimed in an IED explosion. In another grisly episode, a veteran noted his anguish to me after having to clean up the body parts of a soldier that had committed suicide by shooting himself while on guard duty.

While therapy and medication can help, there often is a larger struggle with the moral and spiritual dimensions of killing. The amount of suffering and anguish that occur as a result of PTSD is more significant than I have witnessed with any other psychiatric disorder. I believe that this has everything to do with the atrocity that one has witnessed or participated in. And I have yet to meet one soldier with PTSD who enlisted in the military because he or she felt compelled go to Iraq or Afghanistan to kill people.

So what does this have to do with us? Mennonites are a people of service who rise to help those in need after disasters. What disaster is more cruel or devastating than war? It is fitting that Mennonites should become involved with and assist veterans. As witnesses for peace, we must recognize the devastating effects of war and reach out to those who suffer during war, including veterans. This is not the time to be afraid or conflicted in our efforts; our brothers and sisters are suffering. In Jesus' parable, the Samaritan did not judge the injured man before he moved to rescue him. Neither should we.

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As a young adult I participated in a Mennonite Church Assembly. The theme was "Free to Be Bound to Be Free." Those words challenged me then, and I've thought of them many times since. Now as I reflect on the second chapter of James I'm wondering if what we really want to be saying is that as followers of Jesus we are "free to be bound to make free." That is how I am coming to understand the law of liberty. ▶

Reflections on James 2:1-17 and Mark 7:24-37

THE LAW OF liberty

By Betsy Headrick McCrae

The royal law is the law of the poor, the law that protects those who have little and includes those who are on the margins of society.

In this chapter James gives us three ways of looking at the law. In verse 8 he speaks of the royal law. Which kingdom is he referring to? Rome? Jerusalem? There's a clue in verse 5: "Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?" Aha. The kingdom is the one the poor will inherit. The royal law is the law of the poor, the law that protects those who have little and includes those who are on the margins of society.

He meets her where she is and gives her what she needs. He sets her free.

What is the substance of this law? "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The royal law is the law of love. Love as the standard. Love as the measuring stick for what's the right thing to do.

"So speak and act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty," James continues in verse 12. How does the law of liberty connect with the royal law, the law of love? Remember how Jesus introduces his ministry in the Gospel of Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," he says, "because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." There's the link: The royal law is all about bringing good news to the poor. And the law of liberty is about setting folks free.

When we encounter the law of liberty, whatever has held us captive, holds us no more. We are set free. But this is not a free-for-all; we are set free for a purpose. We are free but we are held to the law of love, which compels us to set others free. We are free to be bound to make free. What builds up, recognizes, gives honor to, breaks bonds, embraces, lifts up and welcomes in is what is lawful and right in God's eyes. We are not called to judge but to love and be merciful. We are called to do whatever it takes to set folks free.

How does it work? How is this put into practice? There are a couple of interesting examples in Mark 7:24-37.

Jesus is tired. He wants to get away. He leaves the Jewish area of Galilee and goes into the land of the Gentiles. Perhaps here he can rest. "Yet he could not escape notice," the text says, "but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet." Even here in this foreign place a needy woman seeks him out. She comes into the house where he has sequestered himself and speaks to him. Jesus reacts harshly.

This woman is a Gentile of Syrophoenician origin. She is a Canaanite, a descendent of this region of Tyre. These things—woman, Gentile, Canaanite—are all strikes against her from the Jewish male perspective. And they may well have made Jesus, a Jewish male, uncomfortable. But Jesus is seldom derailed by such things. Perhaps there's more to it.

The tension in this story may stem from a situation of economic injustice. Landlocked Galilee, a Jewish homeland, exported agricultural produce through the Gentile coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. These cities, in turn, depended on Galilee for food. In periods of crisis or food shortage, when the farmers of Galilee were struggling economically, they may have resented producing goods for the wealthy cities. Like many small farmers in poorer areas in our world today, the Galilean farmers may have had little control over the food they worked hard to produce, leaving them feeling frustrated, underfed and exploited by those who benefited from their labor.

And here is the Syrophoenician woman, a member of this privileged group. She is a person who, relatively speaking, should be able to take care of her own needs. Yet this privileged woman has the gall to break into Jesus' time of rest and ask him for help.

Jesus' first reaction is one of judgment: He says to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Whoa. This is harsh. And this is Jesus speaking. What's happening here? I imagine Jesus thinking of how the Galilean people have been exploited. I imagine him wanting to be on their side in this situation of economic injustice. I imagine him remembering the words of the Old Testament prophets condemning the rich and lifting up the oppressed. What you represent, he says to this woman, is not what is just and right. You don't deserve my help.

Well. Even Jesus has to learn what it means to follow the law of liberty, it seems. Even for Jesus this is not easy or obvious. Even faithful Jesus needs reminding that the law to which God is committed above all else is the law that sets people free. And this is true, even in an uncomfortable situation of injustice like this.

The woman sticks with Jesus. She knows she has a deep need that only he can meet. She responds, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And as she says this, Jesus' eyes are opened. He no longer sees her as a representative of injustice to be shunned. He sees her as a person held captive. He puts his judgment aside and opts for mercy. He meets her where she is and gives her what she needs. He sets her free.

You get the feeling that this was hard on Jesus. In the story he moves on through Gentile territory. And again he is confronted with a situation of need. They bring to him a deaf man who has an impediment in his speech. But he doesn't respond immediately. They have to beg. Jesus finally relents. He takes the man aside and puts his fingers into his ears. Jesus spits and touches the man's tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, he sighs. This whole thing seems to be asking much of him. He seems to be doing it almost against his will. But Jesus says to the man, "Be opened." And immediately the man's ears are opened, his tongue is released and he speaks plainly. He is set free.

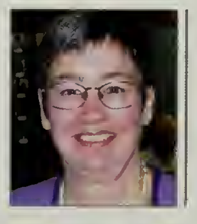
I don't really know why we have these two stories of healing in which Jesus seems so resistant. But there they are in all their difficulty. Perhaps they are there to let us know that it is not easy to live by the law of liberty. Even Jesus had problems with it occasionally. Perhaps these stories are there for us to ponder when we feel that surely God can't really mean for us to respond to the cries we hear, these voices begging for our attention. Perhaps in these stories we see that God really is serious about mercy and that healing must happen. Whether we agree with it or not, those who are in bondage must be set free.

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters," writes James, "if you say you have faith but do not have works? Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

But living according to the law of liberty brings life. When the eyes of the blind are opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped, says the prophet Isaiah, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. Waters shall break forth in the wilderness. Springs of water will feed the thirsty ground.

Perhaps these stories are there for us to ponder when we feel that surely God can't really mean for us to respond to the cries we hear, these voices begging for our attention.

Of course, we are not Jesus. We cannot miraculously heal. But we can act out our faith in ways that respond to the needs around us. We can love our neighbors with an integrity that speaks from the deepest part of us to the deepest part of them and invites them wholeheartedly, freely, into the circle. We can trust that God will work through us to free and heal, even if we are uncomfortable and don't fully understand. We can choose mercy over judgment. Jesus meets us on these terms. We, too, receive mercy. We, too, are set free. And we respond by passing on the freedom. Our faith is not dead. Instead, springs of water break forth in the wilderness around us. Life-giving streams flow through the desert. And we and all those around us drink and live.



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Marginality, displacement and mission

Stanley W. Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, the mission and service agency of Mennonite Church USA.

Walls and borders do not define us. Our primary identity is that of a people of the Way.

I was struck by a recent blog post by Jeremy Yoder. He wrote, "While there will always be rural and small town Mennonite churches, I also believe that Mennonite Church USA's future also lies with the non-Anglo and urban congregations that may better reflect the theologically diverse and multicultural world many of our young people grow up in." His post confirmed for me that the pressing issues surrounding immigration may have profound missional implications.

The two World Wars were a time of heightened marginality for many Anabaptist immigrants who had come earlier to North America seeking a place to pursue their faith in freedom. The climate in many places across the United States today, and particularly in Arizona, stirs up feelings of marginality among more recent immigrants. We see images of people dying in the desert or being arrested in the streets.

In contrast to these images, which evoke pain, suffering, conflict and struggle, John Driver offers compelling depictions of the believing community in his book *Images of the Church in Mission*. The images John draws out of the biblical text are potent metaphors that cause us to see relationships that did not exist before the use of the image; for example, the images of the Bride of Christ and the Body of Christ created new understandings of the nature of the church.

Because images in the Bible often overlap, it may be more productive to think in terms of a "field of imagery." Against the backdrop of our current context, we may need to consider images of the church in mission that show displacement. Displacement alludes to the tension the church experiences from being "in the world but not of it." The essence of mission, being sent (to advance God's purposes in the world), suggests displacement. Every Christian (and the church as a whole) is displaced in the world by virtue of our calling. The tension is exacerbated when we take seriously our identity as "citizens of heaven" who are at the same time set apart as "ambassadors" to the world in which we live.

Just as often, marginality is reflected in biblical images of the people of God. The term describes the experience of people who live between two cultures without fully belonging to either one. The reality of marginality is reflected in the journeys of Jesus among the cultures (and subcultures) of his time. It is also exhibited in Jesus' ministry in the marginality of the Galilee and his witness to the center at Jerusalem. In Jesus, the church finds itself on the way to both the margin and the center, on the way from both and in between both. The missional church is called to walk with Jesus in the way of embracing its marginality as a peculiar people redeemed by God and as the community of those sent by God to engage the world with the good news of God's reconciling love in Jesus. As the church embraces that dual identity, it becomes an agent of reconciliation and transformation in the world. It is in this journey that the church discovers its true identity and gives witness to its essence.

I confess that my personal, social-historical reality as someone who grew up in South Africa predisposes me toward this image of displacement/marginality. I share that with those on the growing edge of Mennonite Church USA, many of whom are recent immigrants. More importantly, however, my spiritual heritage/location as an Anabaptist also joins me to many others whose history and convictions compelled them to embrace a pilgrim identity. The pilgrim imagery carries with it a suggestion that identity is found on the journey of differentiation from the dominant culture as a contrast/alternative community and of witness within that culture as an apostolic community. The apostolic dimension of our identity reminds us that we are sent into a profound and intentional engagement with our culture for the sake of God's good news of healing and hope that comes to us in Jesus Christ.

As Anabaptists, our identity is not circumscribed by particular boundaries, whether of national identity, blood or cultural heritage. Walls and borders do not define us. Our primary identity is that of a people of the Way. We are a people on the Way, called to cross frontiers of culture, language, ethnicity and religious affiliation. Our humanity is defined by God's reign of love and forgiveness, of justice and peace, of hospitality and generosity. As we embrace this distinctiveness, we will be fashioned as a people of witness in a world that is increasingly fearful, exclusive, xenophobic and intolerant. We will be created as an apostolic peoplehood. Is this not what it means to be a missional people? Is this not the vision we have set before ourselves? TM

Of silliness and saints

My birthday falls at the end of October, a season of great silliness in our culture. The TV industry tries to entertain us with its worst horror films. Candy merchants place great hopes on selling sugar to a populace of growing obesity. And people pretending to be conservatives are spending hundreds of millions on ads to warn us against excessive spending.

It is important to step back from the fake fears of Halloween and reclaim a wider perspective. We might not be so easily manipulated by alarmists if we were more determined to make a sober reckoning of our actual situation. The deeper tradition tries to tell us that one good way of doing this is by paying attention to the wisdom and legacy of those who traveled these paths before us.

All Saints Day, coming after the "hallowed evening," invites us into reflection and remembrance. We remember how our fathers and mothers in faith dealt with challenges and adversity. We draw strength from their skills in adapting and surviving, their courage in facing the new and unknown. Hardship made them tough; stories today make them real to us again.

From the years our family spent in Croatia, I treasure the ways we came to understand ourselves and our own culture through the contrasts we experienced there. If we were in Zagreb again this season, we would be joining thousands of the city's residents in flocking by bus or tram to the stately Mirogoj Cemetery on the upper slopes of the town, rolling toward nearby Mount Sljeme. Families stream into the cemetery carrying flowers and candles to mark the resting place of their own relatives but also the national poets and cultural heroes whose work is celebrated afresh each season. Young parents tell their children the tales of their heritage; heroes and goats of yesteryear can be revisited to encourage or warn the living to take heed, consider their ways and seek wisdom.

We loved to join the folks making this annual pilgrimage of sorts. The street vendors peddling hot roasted chestnuts along the way added an alluring attraction. We walked with friends among the monuments, learning chapters of the culture's history in vivid glimpses through the smoky dusk. What makes a people who they are? Where does their resilience come from? How do they handle tough times? Stories give answers and suggest trajectories for dealing with future crises.

But stories need time, they need occasions, they ask us to pay deliberate attention. A poet should not be packaged between commercial breaks. The songs of martyrs do not fit with the froth of soap and sandwich ads. We need to hold hands with the long, unbroken chain of faithful witnesses from previous generations as we hunker down for another long winter.

As our family gathers for upcoming holiday times together, I look forward to holding our new grandson and gathering with our children to tell a few stories of times of testing in the past, of challenges met and accomplishments to celebrate. I hope we also tell tales of loss and failure, since we often have more to learn from them than what may seem simple in the wake of success.

As I learn what it means to become a new grandparent, I am drawn to review the stories from my own grandparents. I realize that if anything worthwhile is to convey from that span of generations into the new ones, I need to carry some freight over the bridge. This little boy I hold in my arms has roots and connections that span four continents already; the family stories I want him to know cover three centuries thus far, and he may well carry them into a fourth. Our faith stories cover four millennia. We definitely have some things we need to talk about.

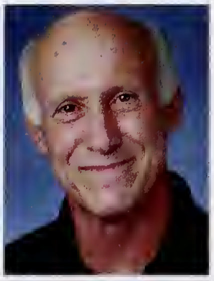
A few years ago I had the privilege of turning 50 in Jerusalem. We walked the walls that day; I posed with a 50-year-old cactus. Some friends on hand, lots of e-mails and cards from afar, and a fun song adapted by our daughter and her friend marked the occasion. That semester season of sabbath reflection stays with me, impacting the way I read my Bible and the way I envision the stories of our faith. There were tough stories at hand, from the past and the present, challenging and disturbing our concepts of shalom and security and ecumenics and interfaith encounters.

When our stories properly place a contested faith heritage at the center of who we are and hope to be, we will have some protection from the fake fears and manufactured silliness that passes for popular culture in this season. We will counter silliness with the sparkling joy of the saints of God. TM

Gerald Shenk is an adjunct professor at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Stories give answers and suggest trajectories for dealing with future crises.

At peace with war? Nope. Just numb.



Roger Martin is a member of Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kan.

I came to the Mennonite church late. I was 51. I loved the church's emphasis on simplicity and service.

Pacifism was harder. It wasn't a matter of fealty to my father, an army sergeant in World War II. He was no glorifier of war. He was wrecked by it. "When he left for Europe, he was a sweet boy," my mother says. "When he came back, he was a hard man."

Rather, pacifism was hard because, reason told me, one well-placed bullet in Hitler's head around 1935 might have made a difference to 6 million Jews—plus many warriors and civilian bystanders. (Think Hiroshima and Nagasaki.)

But I've changed. Already 64, I've spent a lifetime—except for a brief spell between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the first (failed) attack on the World Trade Center—as a citizen of a nation at war, sometimes cold, sometimes hot, never just right, a nation menaced by enemies, real or imagined. I'm sick and tired of it. Sick and tired of all violence.

I'll forgo the moral problems invoked by war. You all know those.

Let me be businesslike instead: The cost-benefit ratio of killing people, to be brutally frank and frankly brutal, has declined sharply. One well-placed bullet in one sociopathic skull in 1935 might have saved millions of lives. Today we spend mountains of dough stalking phantoms in mountain caves.

What do we get for the bucks? Little bang. At best, the result is a nonresult. Goshen or Newton don't get nuked.

In the April issue, the editor asked why Mennonites aren't resisting the current war and posited five reasons.

The reasons I don't see on his list are these.

1. The young don't have a personal stake in war. War is executed by professional soldiers recruited from neighborhoods unfrequented by most people reading this. Protest against Vietnam came about because the young, even the sons of city council members, had some skin in the game. Most of today's young people don't.

2. People don't think they can do a thing about war. I have been alive for wars or military actions in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq (twice), not to mention the more psychologically corrosive Cold War and dread of Al Queda demons. But what can I do? Or you? Or you?

> Mennonites who don't stand up for peace may be absenting themselves from the debate because they feel their words and deeds won't matter.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

I want to suggest an event. Pure whimsy, this. It's inspired by the Tea Party stuff. Whatever else you think about the partiers, they're leveraging their message through media.

We need an alternative tea party, one that says taxation and big government aren't the problems.

A sense of powerlessness is the problem, the chasm between our leaders and us.

My fantasy for this group is a made-for-TV, You Tube-worthy event called "Walk for a Change." Somebody young starts walking toward Washington, D.C. Then somebody else joins that person. Then more somebodies. Old gaffers, even. The unemployed. Even some tea partiers. We're all walking for a change that empowers more of us to feel connected to leaders. Even if we have to rewrite the Constitution and change the electoral system to achieve that.

Can't you just see it? The flyovers by helicopters of the ever-enlarging crowds trudging east, permitting broadcast on the nightly news?

The systemic change we seek will allow us to dislodge leaders who think they own their elected positions because, well, they just about do, thanks to a toxic blend of well-heeled special interests and an enervated electorate.

The walkers all talk to each other, left wing and right, and find out what understandings they share about the problem, even if they disagree on solutions. In Washington, they sit outside the White House and keep talking until they arrive, by a consensus decision-making process, in good old Mennonite fashion, at a set of measures designed to up the impact of nonpoliticians on government decision-making and dilute the impact of money.

Even if this involves rewriting the Constitution. Even if it peels 10,000 points off the Dow. Even, that is, if it turns my Golden Years to Leaden Ones.

Mennonites who don't stand up for peace may be absenting themselves from the debate because they feel their words and deeds won't matter.

But a sense of power is like an unused muscle. It atrophies if it's not exercised. Exercise demands engagement, a willingness to strain after a result. That straining after results demands vision. So Mennonite resistance to war must begin with vision.

If you don't like "Walk for a Change," then convene a group to cook up a vision you do like. Turn off the TV. Do it today.

MPN may merge with Third Way Media

Plan was approved by publishing, mission boards; awaits MC Canada's OK

Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, and Third Way Media, a department of Mennonite Mission Network, plan to integrate and form a new organization.

The integration was approved on Sept. 23 by the boards of MPN and Mission Network, meeting in Pittsburgh. The approval is subject to the affirmation of Mennonite Church Canada, part owner of MPN, and the ratification of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

Mennonite Church Canada's General Board and Formation Council will discuss the integration proposal later this fall. The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board affirmed the general direction of the proposed integration plan at its meetings in Pittsburgh.

The MPN and Mission Network boards also approved the creation of a reference group, made up of members of the MPN and Mission Network boards, to help shepherd the integration process.

In approving the integration, the two boards noted that the integration of MPN, which is based in Scottdale, Pa., and Waterloo, Ont., and Third Way Media, based in Harrisonburg, Va., will be beneficial for the church.

The integration plan, coauthored by business consultant Allon Lefever and Duane Stoltzfus, who teaches media and communications at Goshen (Ind.) College, calls for a new name for the organization and for the consolidation of as many operations as possible into one primary location to help improve efficiency and sustainability. The plan recommends that this location be in Harrisonburg, Va., with an on-site CEO.

Dreams for the new organization include becoming a clearing house and center of Anabaptist content, working with communication and creative writing departments at Mennonite colleges and universities, partnering with other denominations looking to use media, and fostering new creative talent.

"The possibilities are many," says Stoltzfus. "The key is bringing together a highly talented group of creative persons who can stay abreast of these opportunities—people who can create products and services to meet a future in the world of media that is, in many ways, still yet undefined."

While excited by the possibilities presented by the integration of the two organizations, MPN executive director Ron Rempel says "these changes will not be without some pain due to relocation and consolidation … we believe it is essential for the long-term sustainability and to enable us to better serve the church."

Interim Third Way co-director Sheri Hartzler says "working together will bring financial stability and at the same time reach a wider audience with the good news of the gospel."

On the financial side, the integration will help both organizations work toward sustainability through cost savings, new products and services, and new marketing initiatives.

In the current fiscal year, MPN expects revenues of about $3.2 million from the sale of books, curriculum and other items, while Third Way Media expects just over $532,000 from grants, donations and sales.

Since Third Way Media has been a department of Mission Network for more than 50 years, Mission Network has pledged financial support and services for the new organization to facilitate the integration, especially during the first five years. The new organization will relate to both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada and will retain a presence in Canada. It will also continue to offer products and services through existing brands, such as Herald Press, Faith & Life Resources and Third Way.—*John Longhurst of Mennonite Publishing Network*

Publishing Network director to retire

Ron Rempel, 65, executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network, announced his retirement Sept. 23 during the MPN board meeting in Pittsburgh. He will leave the organization next summer. During his seven years as executive director, MPN eliminated a legacy debt of almost $5 million, created a major new Sunday school curriculum called *Gather 'Round*, brought costs under control through consolidation and downsizing and began a process leading to integration with Third Way Media. All these things will be part of Rempel's legacy, says MPN board chair Phil Bontrager, noting that he "provided consistent and gentle leadership" during times of "significant change and disruption."

Rempel says it's been good to be "part of MPN's turnaround." But what was especially gratifying, he says, was "to see the church re-embrace publishing and to see MPN draw closer to the church." At the same time, he says, "there are still challenges ahead for the new organization and a lot of work yet to be done. … I'm looking forward to how we will find new ways to be of service to the church and a witness to the world."—*John Longhurst for Mennonite Publishing Network*

Executive Board gets conflicting advice

Moderator-elect says conversations were 'candid, direct and open.'

After a Leaders Forum marked by disagreement over whether to hold the denomination's 2013 convention in Phoenix (see page 39), Mennonite Church USA Executive Board members sought a positive way forward. The EB met in Pittsburgh Sept. 23 and 25.

They expressed disappointment over unresolved conflict but saw hope that the church could learn and grow from the experience.

"We were able to practice and live out how we love each other when we disagree," board member Elizabeth Soto Albrecht said Sept. 25. "It was painful, but we were functioning as one body. There were many parts hurting, and we were all hurting together. God was with us."

Moderator-elect Dick Thomas praised the leaders' willingness to speak freely, even to express pain and anger.

"I would celebrate the fact that our conversation was candid, direct and open in a way we don't often do," he said.

"We need to be able to have these kinds of conversations around difficult questions. It shows a desire to grow in our ability to discern what the Spirit is saying to the church."

The Executive Board met before and after the Leaders Forum, a gathering of more than 200 members of denominational agency boards, constituency groups and the Constituency Leaders Council, an advisory group.

Leaders Forum participants struggled with conflicting advice about whether to withdraw the denomination's 2013 convention from Phoenix.

The Intercultural Relations Reference Committee, composed of representatives from racial/ethnic groups, presented a recommendation to go to Phoenix. But leaders of Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) said they had not changed their stance against holding the convention there.

It was painful, but we were functioning as one body.—Elizabeth Soto Albrecht

At issue is Arizona's Senate Bill 1070, an immigration law that critics say will lead to racial profiling and create a hostile environment for Hispanics.

Thomas and moderator Ed Diller said the board would need to decide within six months whether to withdraw from Phoenix. They said input from the Leaders Forum, presented in written summaries of conversations at table groups, would provide important new counsel.

"We are committed to working at these issues that are divisive in ways that make us stronger and not weaker," Soto Albrecht said.

On Sept. 23, before the Leaders Forum meeting, board member Juanita Nuñez said she had talked to people of other denominations who were glad to hear that Mennonites were talking about immigration issues.

"A lot of people are looking up to us and asking what is going to happen in the Mennonite church?" she said.

Glen Guyton, associate executive director for constituent resources, said the Phoenix question was symbolic of much larger issues.

"We don't want the focus to be on Phoenix," he said. "How do we as a church walk in solidarity with all people? That is the core. We cannot focus on the location."

The board met Sept. 25 with representatives of Mennonite World Conference and expressed strong interest in inviting MWC to hold its 2015 assembly in the United States.

MWC's Executive Committee has stated a preference for the United States. The last assembly in the United States was in Wichita, Kan., in 1978. The last one in North America was in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1990.

The likely U.S. location would be eastern Pennsylvania. A U.S. group did a feasibility study for hosting in that area in 2004, before MWC officials chose Paraguay for the 2009 gathering.

MWC representatives Larry Miller, Iris de Leon-Hartshorn and Bert Lobe met with the board. They hope to receive invitations from MWC's three U.S. member churches—Mennonite Church USA, the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the Brethren in Christ Church—and an associate member, Conservative Mennonite Conference.

Board members also discussed whether to try what Diller called the "Pittsburgh experiment"—to suspend most resolutions in favor of a more consensus-based method of decision-making at next summer's denominational convention in Pittsburgh.

"There is no intent to shut down discussion of important issues in the assembly," said Ervin Stutzman, executive director. "We want to have more time to discuss concerns but a less emotionally charged meeting."

Diller said the board would use written comments from Leaders Forum table groups to help decide whether to de-emphasize resolutions at Pittsburgh.

Board members also met with the boards of Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Health Services Alliance to build relationships with them. The board's next meeting is to be in Tampa, Fla., Jan. 7-9, 2011.—*Paul Schrag of* Mennonite Weekly Review, *reprinted with permission*

Leaders Forum struggles with convention decision

Iglesia Menonita Hispana's position remains to 'rethink' convention location.

Whether or not Mennonite Church USA has a convention in Phoenix in 2013, church leaders are committed to solidarity with immigrants. More than 200 leaders representing Mennonite Church USA, churchwide organizations and area conferences gathered for the first time outside a convention. They discussed topics such as whether to move the 2013 convention from Phoenix due to Arizona's immigration law.

Though various opinions were shared Sept. 23-25 in Pittsburgh during a Leaders' Forum—including differing statements from two church groups—leaders said they will discern God's will together.

"The full burden of this decision has been placed on the shoulders of our Hispanic constituency," said Glen Guyton, Mennonite Church USA associate executive director for constituent resources, the staff person who relates with racial/ethnic groups. "The Phoenix decision is only a symbol of much bigger challenges we face as Mennonite Church USA—that racial/ethnic congregations are missions and not valuable contributors."

Guyton is part of Mennonite Church USA's Intercultural Relations Reference Committee, a group that works on common racial/ethnic issues. Guyton presented an IRRC statement that recommends holding the 2013 convention in Phoenix, "although we understand that some in our racial/ethnic constituency may not agree."

The IRRC includes representatives from all three official Mennonite Church USA racial/ethnic groups—Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church), African-American Mennonite Association and Native Mennonite Ministries.

The statement calls the church to 12 steps of racial inclusion and equality. These include making the churchwide priority of antiracism a more prominent part of conventions and offering support to "recent immigrants in our communities without making judgment."

The IRRC includes two representatives of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, who wrote a letter in April asking denominational leaders to "rethink" the Phoenix convention. Yvonne Diaz, executive director of Iglesia Menonita Hispana and an IRRC member, said the Hispanic church's position has not changed.

"There's a hostile environment there," Diaz said. "It's very detrimental to our Latino brothers and sisters."

Yvonne Diaz

Representatives from Iglesia Menonita Hispana and IRRC were not alone in their differing views. Malinda Berry, Mennonite Education Agency board member, said the Phoenix decision is morally ambiguous. "There is no clear right or wrong answer," Berry said.

Chuck Neufeld, a member of the Constituency Leaders Council, said pastors in Illinois Conference came to a strong consensus: "Unless IMH is asking us to meet in Phoenix, we can't," he said.

Kenneth Thompson, Executive Board member, said there's a difference between uniformity and unity. "In the Scriptures, presence, not absence, makes the difference," he said. "For those who choose to go, go fully dressed in the armor of God. If you go, go with a purpose."—*Sheldon Good of* Mennonite Weekly Review, *reprinted with permission*

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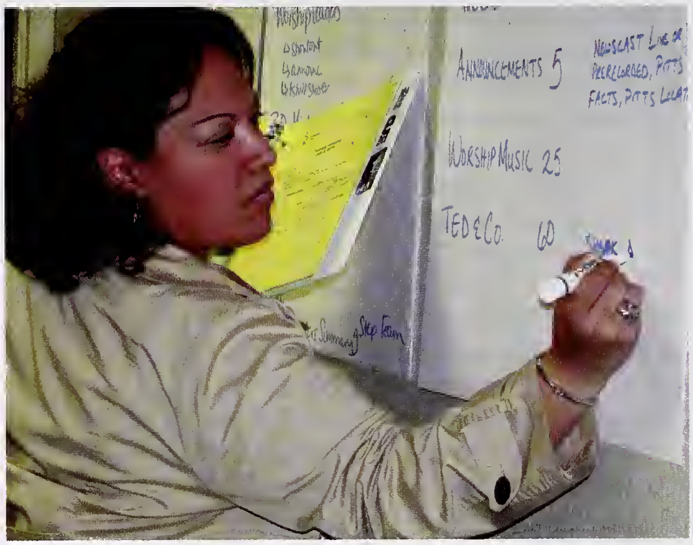
Pittsburgh 2011: a multicultural family reunion

'We are the Church' Day is now a central theme in planning for convention.

Laurie Oswald Robinson



Marisa Alemán-Cantú, who is part of the youth worship committee and worship band, at a planning meeting for Pittsburgh 2011.

The more Grace Pam of Los Angeles Faith Chapel, a Mennonite pastor of Nigerian descent, helps plan multicultural activities for Pittsburgh 2011, the better she feels about being part of the "family reunion" that Mennonite Church USA conventions can symbolize.

"When you come to convention from an ethnic congregation in an outlying area conference, it's easy to feel like an outsider," says Pam, who is a member of the Mennonite Church USA's Intercultural Relations Reference Committee (IRRC) and the Pittsburgh 2011 youth worship planning committee.

An increased sense of belonging and ownership for racial/ethnic constituents is what convention planners such as Pam hope to foster during the churchwide convention set for July 4-9, 2011.

Throughout the week, convention participants will have opportunities to experience the diverse ethnic and cultural traditions of Mennonite Church USA, as underrepresented racial/ethnic constituents serve as speakers and leaders of worship, music and seminars for both youth and adults.

On "We Are the Church" Day (July 6), the day's events and activities will have a multicultural focus. That evening, the main events will be the racial/ethnic constituency group gatherings and the People of Color Dinner.

The vision for dedicating a day of the convention to celebrating the gifts, talents, languages and worship styles of underrepresented racial/ethnic Mennonites came into being when the Intercultural Relations Reference Committee (IRRC) met in October 2009. The committee recommended cancelling plans for a separate churchwide gathering of underrepresented racial/ethnic people set for August and redirecting those resources and energies toward creating more integration at Pittsburgh 2011.

While the initial vision was to have multicultural programming on one day of the convention, "this 'day' has become a central theme in the planning for the entire convention," says Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. "We are choosing to better incorporate racial/ethnic gifts and talents throughout the week."

Miller says that during the slot when youth and adults share seminar options, racial/ethnic people will lead half the seminars. Throughout the week, Scriptures will be presented in multiple languages, and Spanish speakers will help lead worship music.

Marisa Alemán-Cantú of Rock Island, Ill., member of the youth worship committee and youth worship band, says the committee selected musicians who would be able to lead worship in different styles and different languages.

"The amazing thing about being able to come to a Mennonite convention is that you get to experience many styles of music that our congregations use in worship—a hymn, a gospel song, hip hop or a Latino rhythm—but the great thing is that we're all worshiping the same God," she says.

Femi Fatunmbi, pastor of Royal Dominion Family Chapel in Los Angeles and a member of the IRRC and the adult worship planning committee, says: "Creating this day for Pittsburgh 2011 feels like a big, big step for us. It feels like the first time the church is fully saying, 'We accept you as persons, not just as projects.'"

Fatunmbi hopes these new efforts will push Anglo-Europeans—many of whose ancestors were immigrants to America from Germany and Russia—to reflect more deeply on what it means to be people who are adopted into the same family of God, no matter what their origin.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson and Annette Brill Bergstresser for Mennonite Church USA*

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

The Pittsburgh 2011 convention will be held July 4-9, 2011, in downtown Pittsburgh. The theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.

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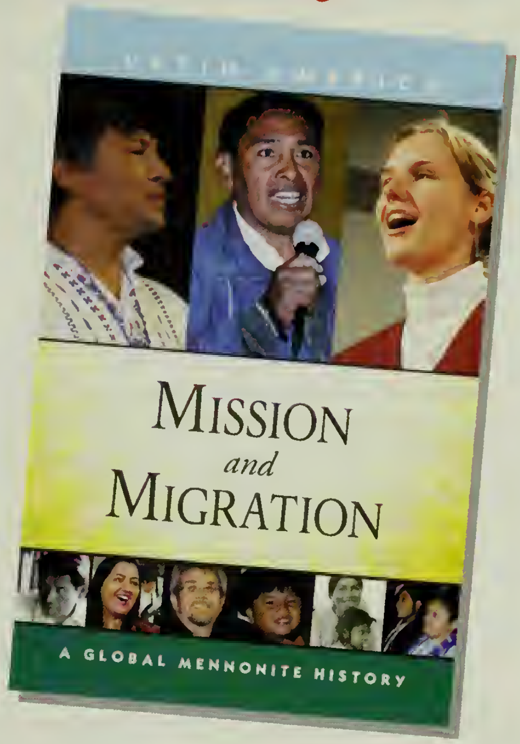

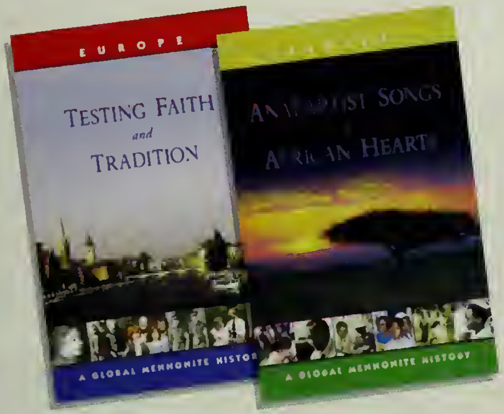
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The Global Mennonite History Series was initiated by Mennonite World Conference at its thirteenth Assembly held in Calcutta, India, January 1997. In order to "tell the story of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches" and to promote "mutual understanding, and stimulate the renewal and extension of Anabaptist Christianity worldwide," the Global Mennonite History organizers received a mandate to produce a five-volume history series, with the aim of telling the stories of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches from around the world. The volumes, one for each continent, were to be written by persons from their respective continents, and would reflect the experiences, perspectives and interpretations of the local churches.

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Mennonites apologize to Native Americans

Leaders in Lancaster, Pa., ask forgiveness for over 300 years of abuse.

Mennonite, Presbyterian and Quaker leaders, along with state and local government officials, apologized and asked forgiveness for 300 years of misunderstanding, neglect and abuse of Native Americans in Lancaster County, Pa., in a public ceremony at First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, on Oct. 9.

Their statements were received by Native Americans representing the Iroquois, Lenape, Shawnee, Susquehanna and other tribes who once lived in the area, as well as Native people from other regions who now live in Lancaster.

The service was part of Lancaster Roots 300, a year-long series of events organized by Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House to commemorate the first European settlement here in 1710.

Lloyd Hoover, Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishop; Steve Lapp, Amish minister; J. Richard Thomas, moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA; and Keith Wilson, Atlantic Coast Conference coordinator, read together a Mennonite Resolution of Apology to Native Peoples signed by a score of local Mennonite leaders.

The statement says, "As Mennonites and the first European settlers of the land known as Lancaster County ... we recognize that we have failed in living out our convictions to live peacefully and express love for all people as modeled and taught by Jesus Christ."

In 1717, Pennsylvania's Quaker founder, William Penn, set aside 16,000 acres for the local Conestoga tribe as agreed by treaty. But beginning in 1730, a rapidly growing population of Mennonites and other immigrants hunted, fished and occupied portions of the Conestoga Manor.

By 1763, the situation was so dire that the tribe formally complained to the state that they were starving and naked—unable to provide for their community with the land and wildlife that remained. That same year, a militia of Presbyterians from Paxton Township, frustrated by violence on the Pennsylvania frontier, rode into Lancaster and brutally murdered the remaining Conestogas while they were under protective custody in the town jail.

No one from the militia was prosecuted, and Mennonites failed to call for justice, despite the fact that they held positions in local government during this time period, the Mennonite resolution says.

"In my opinion, they were hypocrites," said Mary Ann Robins, an Onondaga Indian who lives in Lancaster County. "We had the same problems—religious persecution and being denied the freedom to live in peace. These religious groups had no sympathy or regard for us; they ignored what was happening to our people."

Lowell Brown

Curtis Zunigha of the Lenape tribe speaks at the Oct. 9 ceremony.

Uhma Ruth Py, a Lenape elder whose ancestors married Pennsylvania Germans, said, "From the 1700s, 1800s and early 1900s, we had to hide our identities, and as a result, we have lost a lot of our culture."

On Oct. 9, there were signs of progress.

"I believe this is a sincere apology," said Curtis Zunigha, a representative of the Delaware tribe. "I will go back and share your sentiments and your words and ask if they want to offer forgiveness."

J.R. Boyd, a chief of the Lakota/Dakota Sioux, went a step further. "I forgive you," he said. "I forgive you for murdering my people. I forgive you for raping my people. I forgive you for the pain and suffering I still deal with, for breaking the spirit of our children."

Several people in the room sobbed audibly. Native American and church leaders agreed that these words will seem hollow without tangible signs of contrition and forgiveness. Among other efforts, Mennonites will support construction of a replica Native American longhouse at the 1719 Hans Herr House, said Brinton Rutherford, a resource staff person for Lancaster Mennonite Conference. The 1719 Herr House is seeking $100,000 for its construction and an additional $250,000 as an endowment for maintenance and interpretative costs.

On Oct. 16, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society introduced a new tour book, *Pequea Settlement 1710: Self-Guided Tour*, with a tour of six sites that are part of Lancaster County's first European settlement.—*Lowell Brown for* The Mennonite

MEDA gets crash course on safety

Consultant says driving a car is the most dangerous threat for workers.

Buckle up. Stay healthy. Keep a low profile. Those are the safest things you can do when working in a conflict zone, according to a security consultant for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

MEDA has not suffered external threats in its 57 years of development work but decided to review security protocols in light of its projects in high-tension areas like Afghanistan and Pakistan. It brought international staff together last March to hear from Charlie Watt, a New Zealand-based security expert who has worked with development organizations and understands their cultural and spiritual outlook.

Watt emphasized that danger was not confined to regions of conflict and that staff safety reached into seemingly mundane issues such as personal health and accidents. "It's not just bombs and bullets," he said.

The most dangerous thing most development workers do is drive a vehicle, said Watt. Far more expatriates fell victim to routine traffic accidents than to security incidents, especially in regions where roads were in poor shape and traffic laws nonexistent or unenforced.

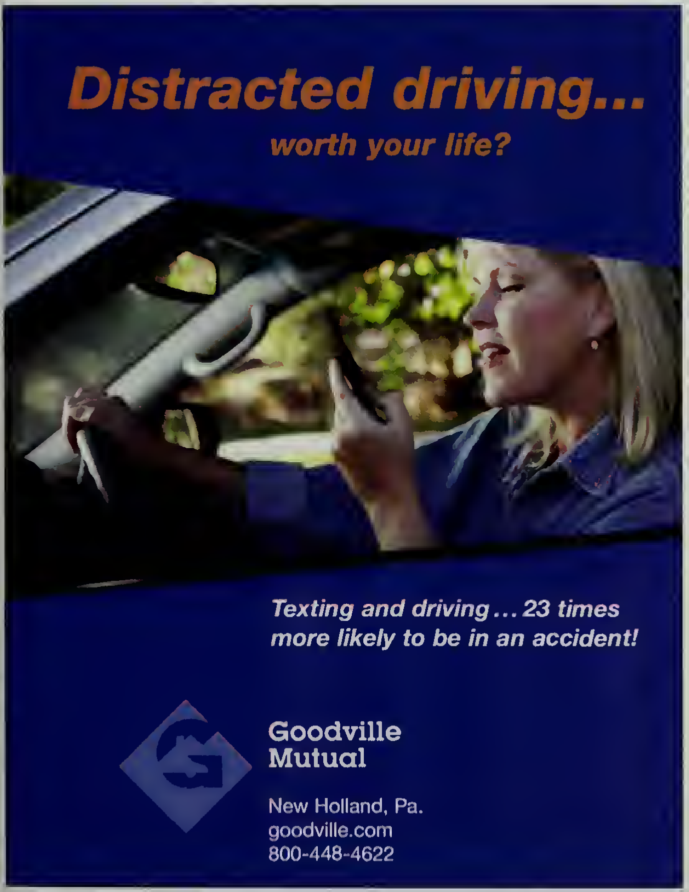
Simple fatigue was another danger zone, so proper sleep and nutrition and a realistic work schedule were crucial.

While MEDA has never experienced a terrorist threat, other development agencies have not been so fortunate, Watt cautioned. Any agency working in failed states needed guidelines in place, including the unlikely contingency of requiring staff extraction from danger zones, he said.

Other tips:

- "Keep a low profile. While some agencies use armored vehicles and armed guards, my advice is, don't go there," said Watt. "Once you've stepped up to that level, you can't come back." He said barbed wire, big walls and armed guards make people in the neighborhood wonder, "What is going on there that they need this extra security?"
- "Your life is more important than material possessions, MEDA's property or your project. Is someone breaking in? Let them. Your life is worth more than a photocopier or a laptop."
- "Don't bribe officials. One bribe leads to another and advertises that money is available."
- "Treat police and military with respect; their orders may seem stupid, but that doesn't mean they are."
- "Never take sides or express solidarity with any faction or political view."
- "Reduce the likelihood of theft by being aware of the substantially increased value of money and materials in impoverished societies or communities impacted by war and drought."
- "Observe what's known as the Bosnia rule—if any person in the vehicle is unhappy about a journey on security grounds, then abort the trip."

He also offered counsel on detecting surveillance and how to behave if abducted but added, "Most development workers, even in conflict zones, are most vulnerable to the same safety threats they'd face at home."—*Wally Kroeker for Mennonite Economic Development Agency*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No tax exemption for multicultural church

Buildings were tax-exempt when owned by a white congregation, pastor says.

Before purchasing a church and adjoining parsonage on Sunset Street in Trainer, Pa., in December 2004, Pastor Keith Collins went door-to-door to see whether anyone would have a problem seeing a new and decidedly different ministry in town. He said he was warmly received.

Collins is senior pastor and founder of the Church of the Overcomer of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference. When he purchased the foreclosed-on church and parsonage together for $180,000, he did not expect to find himself swimming in debt thanks to taxes levied on his properties by the borough, county and Chichester School District.

"For the better part of 100 years, both of these buildings were owned by a Wesleyan Church with a predominantly white congregation, and both of the buildings were tax-exempt," he says. "Now that there is an African-American pastor with a multicultural, multiethnic congregation, things have changed. Initially, we were receiving tax bills on both the church and the parsonage.

"They relented on the church, but we have been paying taxes on the parsonage property for the last five years, even though it is used exclusively for charitable activities that benefit the community."

Collins describes the double standard as "premeditated and biased at best and racially motivated at worst," adding that other churches within the school district with similar holdings have not been held to the same standard.

Denied exempt status for the parsonage by the county's Board of Assessment and Appeals in 2008, Collins appealed to Common Pleas Court, which ruled in the church's favor in February. In his opinion, Judge James F. Proud said Collins needed to establish that the church meets the benchmarks of a purely public charity to receive tax-exempt status for the parsonage building.

Collins has filed complaints against the county and school district with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, claiming racial and religious discrimination. He has also filed for tax exemptions for two other properties he owns at 1001 and 1004 Sunset St.

Collins says the properties are both listed for sheriff's sale, but he plans to pay the roughly $7,000 in back taxes and hopefully start fresh with his tax exemptions in place. He seeks the immediate withdrawal of the school board's Commonwealth Court appeal, the granting of full tax exemption for all his properties and restitution of all taxes paid and legal fees encountered by the church.

"We met with the Delaware County Real Estate Appeals Board [on Oct. 6] and we will be notified by mail in November concerning our tax-exemption status," wrote Collins in an Oct. 6 e-mail. "We have an En Banc argument in front of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court on Oct. 13 in Philadelphia. We appreciate the prayers of the Mennonite community and its leaders on our behalf."

Collins said they spent over $5,000 in legal fees. "We would greatly appreciate any financial assistance," he wrote on Oct. 11.—*Timothy Logue of* Delaware County Daily Times *with reporting by Anna Groff, reprinted with permission*

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Conrado & Esther Hinojosa, Brownsville, Texas, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in October.

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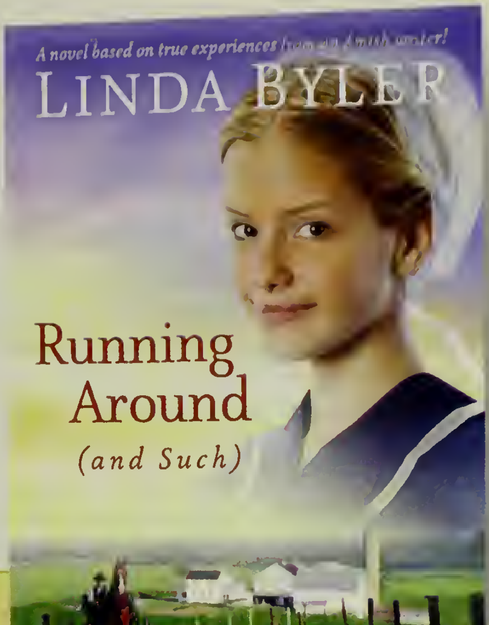
Lizzie's adventures continue in ***When Strawberries Bloom***, the second book in the *Lizzie Searches for Love* series.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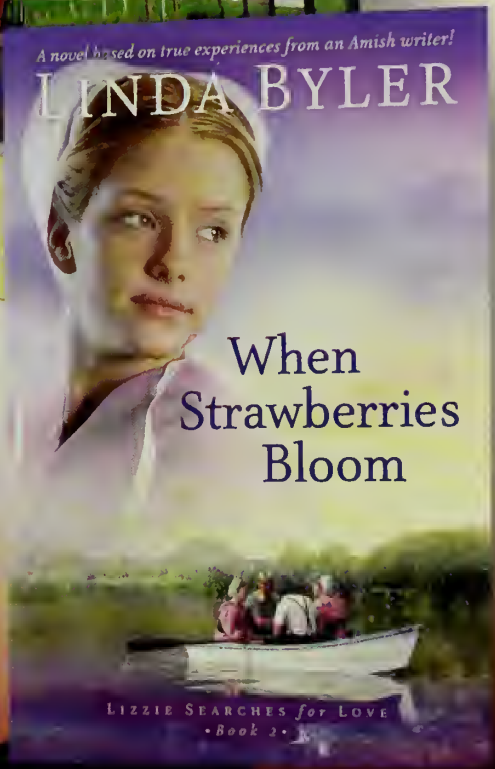

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COMMUNIQUÉ

Official communication from Mennonite Church USA Executive Board

'Conversation Room' at Pittsburgh 2011

Planning is well underway for Convention 2011 in Pittsburgh. A new feature of the convention floor plan is a so-called "Conversation Room." That room will be located near the large space used for delegate sessions and adult worship and has been created in response to suggestions from delegates at previous conventions. The specific request was for more opportunities to talk with other adults about important issues outside of the actual delegate meetings. Our expectation is that as we talk together in this room, we will do so in ways reflective of our desire for loving dialogue and that the things we learn in that setting will inform our conversations in other meetings such as the delegate sessions.

As Pittsburgh 2011 approaches, we hope that you will seize the opportunity to memorize our beautiful Vision: Healing and Hope (see box). As you do, you will notice the community emphasis in that vision, specifically the words "grow[ing] as communities of grace, joy and peace."

In order for us to grow as communities, we need to engage in meaningful communication with one another. Unfortunately, we frequently do not take the time or do not have the opportunity to do that. Lack of communication can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust and separation from one another—clearly not the model we are seeking. As a church we are committed to ongoing dialogue and discernment and "agreeing and disagreeing in love" even when we have differing understandings around questions of faith and life.

Vision: Healing and Hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit,
to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace
so that God's healing and hope
flow through us to the world.

Conventions are a wonderful time for our Mennonite Church USA family. They provide us with opportunities for connecting with old friends and for talking with new friends who are committed Anabaptist Christians about their understandings of, and experiences in living out their Christian callings. When that happens, we expand our own spiritual knowledge and our own insights into the world beyond ourselves.

The Conversation Room will be a special place for listening and conversation. We invite individuals or groups in that room to engage in specific conversations about the resolutions and statements that Mennonite Church USA has adopted over the years, such as those dealing with health care, immigration, sexuality and human trafficking.

Some of these conversations might be difficult or involve topics with which we are not comfortable. Our hope is that the Conversation Room will be a place where convention-goers can be in dialogue with and learn from each other, where people can develop understanding and relationship and where we can agree and disagree in love. That depth of conversation is something for which people have been asking at our conventions.

So that we utilize this Conversation Room for its highest purpose, there will be trained people available to sit and talk with us about our conversations and ways that we can communicate with our Christian brothers and sisters.

Many with whom we have discussed this experiment are excited about the possibilities for the conversations that may occur in this Conversation Room, but others have concerns. We trust that the adults using this room will remember and understand that those with whom they are speaking are beloved children of God, people made in God's own image, and that the people there are seeking to strengthen their own relationships with God.

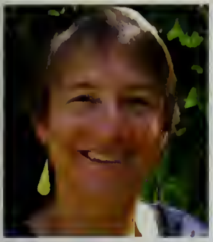
We feel confident that the Conversation Room will add meaningfully to our Convention experience. Please pray that we use this room to help us grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, and pray further that as we grow in those ways, that God's healing and hope will flow through us to the world.—*Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA*

Mennonite
Church
USA

San Francisco pastor disciplined

Conference and congregation state they want to work together.

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference (PSMC) sanctioned Sheri Hostetler, pastor of First Mennonite Church of San Francisco, for officiating at a same-sex marriage between two gay men in her congregation. The conference and church emphasize that they want to work together.



A joint statement dated Sept. 29 from Hostetler and conference moderator Brian Fry said, "Seeking to maintain unity and to learn from each other, PSMC and [First Mennonite] have committed to remain in dialogue and to walk together through this process."

Hostetler "understands this action as an integral part of her pastoral call to serve her congregation by being a pastor to all of the members of her congregation, without exception," said the statement. In mid-September, the congregation invited a delegation of conference leaders to meet in San Francisco for a time of sharing. The delegation included Fry, Stan Friesen, interim conference minister, and Femi Fatunmbi, chair of the Pastoral Leadership Committee (PLC). They met with Mennonite Voluntary Service workers in the city, shared a fellowship meal with the congregation's leadership team and spoke with congregational members after the service.

The conference responded to Hostetler's action by requesting that she "step down" from her role as a member of the conference PLC, according to the statement. The conference also placed her ministerial credentials on probation. The probationary period, which began Feb. 5, will probably end two years from then, Fry said on Sept. 30.

Mennonite Church USA has membership guidelines that require a review of ministerial credentials when a minister performs a same-sex covenanting ceremony.

First Mennonite's steering co-chair, Sharon Heath, wrote in an e-mail on Oct. 1: "We are trying very hard to practice 'Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love' [a policy statement of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference] and to learn how to do that. It's why we issued a joint statement. We think it's different from other things that have happened when a church has been 'disciplined.' It's often been a top-down event; there is an element of 'top-downness' here, but we've talked back and they're listening," Heath said.—*Anna Groff*

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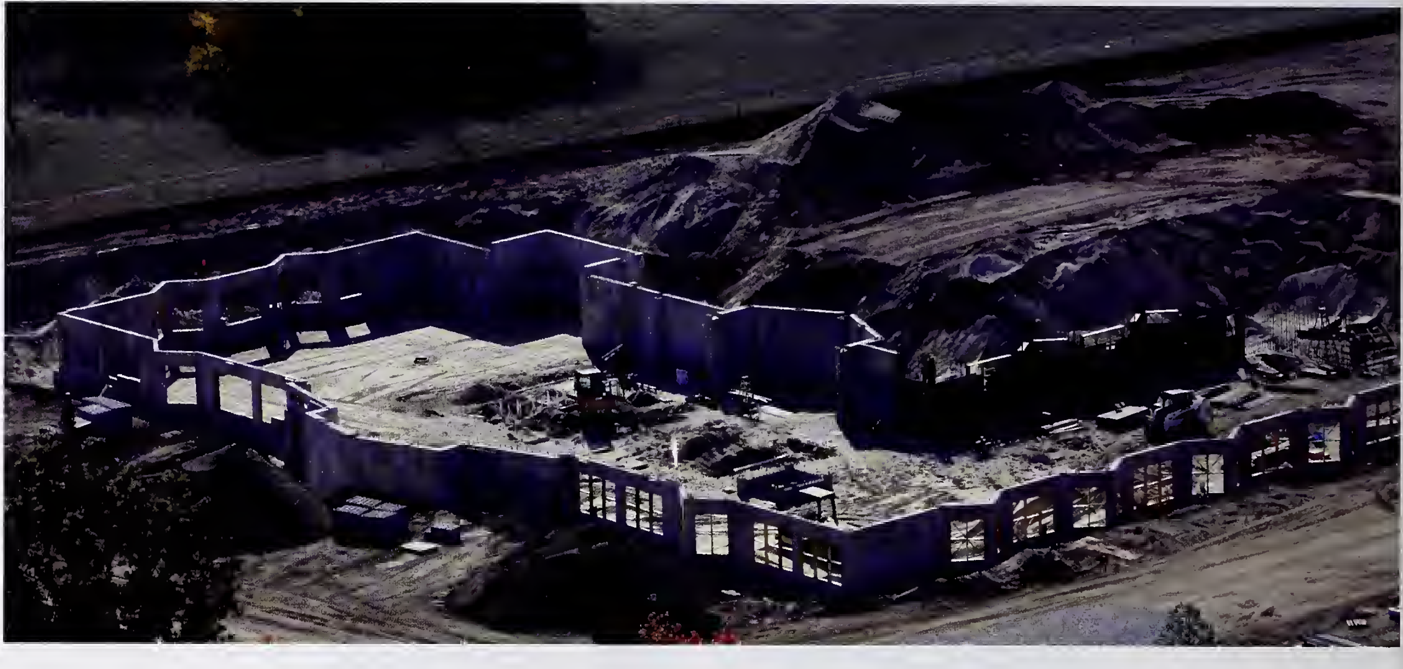
One to go, one good to go

MC USA offices in Elkhart, Ind., take shape; Everence gets new addition.

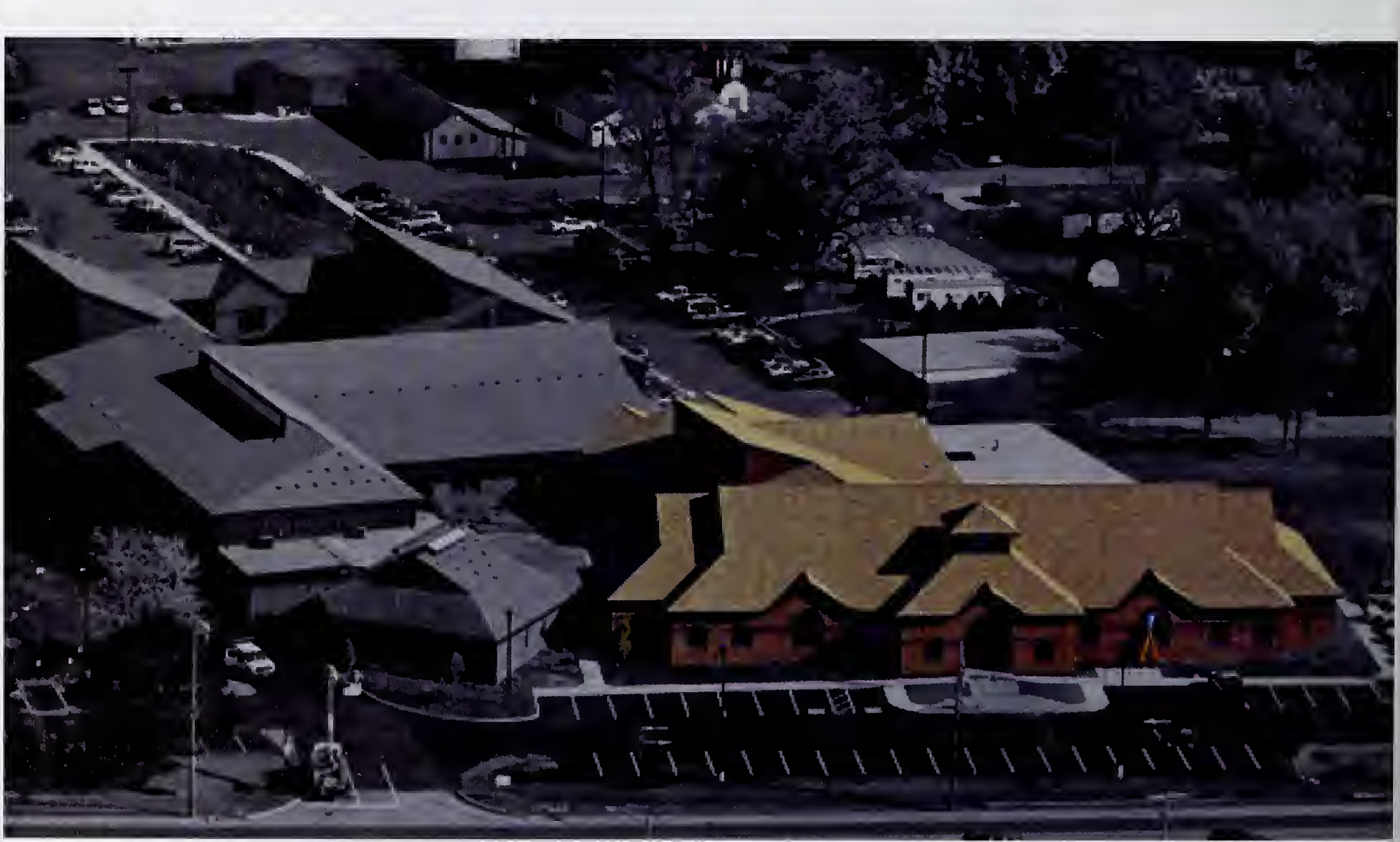
Everett Thomas



Above: Most first-floor walls for Mennonite Church USA's new office building were poured by Oct. 12. The building is adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart, Ind. Completion date is currently projected for November 2011.

Below: A new addition for the Everence (formerly Mennonite Mutual Aid) headquarters in Goshen, Ind., was completed by Oct. 11. The addition (in color) will also house a branch office for the Everence credit union (formerly Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union).

Everett Thomas



RESOURCES

The Catholic Prayer Bible: Lectio Divina Edition (Paulist Press, 2010, $39.95 hardcover, $29.95 paperback) is designed for those who want to reflect on individual stories or chapters of the biblical books while being led to prayer through meditation on those passages. "Lectio divina," the reflective reading of Scripture, has been a popular devotional practice in the church from the earliest centuries.

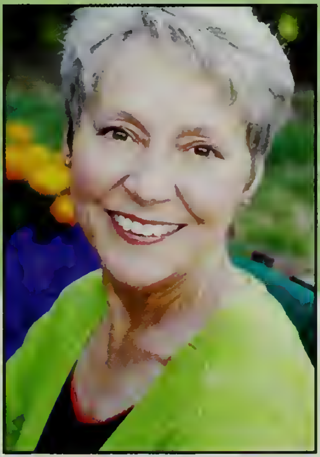
Between Truth and Fiction: A Narrative Reader in Literature and Theology, edited by David Jasper and Allen Smith (Baylor University Press, 2010, $29.95), provides readers with a variety of texts spanning from the Bible into the present and guides readers through exercises in interpretation and reflection. The book asks how we read and how that affects theological thinking and practice. It includes excerpts from the works of Augustine of Hippo, Anselm of Cantebury, Karl Barth, Dostoevsky, Ian McEwan, Julian of Norwich, C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot, Shakespeare, Graham Greene, Margaret Atwood, Martin Luther King Jr., Salman Rushdie, Virginia Woolf, David Eggers and others.

Sacred Space: The Quest for Transcendence in Science Fiction, Film and Television by Douglas E. Cowan (Baylor University Press, 2010, $24.95) argues that science fiction is the genre of possibility and hope, a principal canvas on which writers, artists and filmmakers have sketched their visions of this transcendent potential for generations.

The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation by Richard Bauckham (Baylor University Press, 2010, $24.95) is a biblical investigation into the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. Bauckham discovers a tradition of a "community of creation" in which human beings are fellow members with God's other creatures, and true reconciliation with God involves the entire creation.

The Melody of Faith: Theology in an Orthodox Key by Vigen Guroian (Eerdmans, 2010, $14) presents the fundamental beliefs of Orthodox Christianity through the metaphor of music. Guroian weaves together themes of creation and new creation, beginning and end, sin and holiness, Incarnation and deification, sacrifice and salvation.

The Least Among You (Lionsgate) is a 97-minute DVD inspired by the true story of Rev. Dr. Charles Marks. "Richard Kelly" is arrested in the 1965 Watts riots and must serve probation at an all-white seminary. Despite encouragement from its president, he faces acts of racial prejudice. His meeting Samuel Benton, the seminary's gardener, helps him change his life and others.



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Church planters in the wine cellar

Instead of new and old wineskins, new and old churches coexist together.

Life on the edges of the church is a challenge that church planters are called to every day. So how can they get the support they need from each other and from people at the "center" of the church?

On Oct. 8-9, the Northeast conferences of Mennonite Church USA sponsored a church-planting event in Baltimore, Md., to answer that question. Hosted by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church at its building in Baltimore, the event brought church planters and conference and denominational leaders together for listening, networking and worship. Mennonite Mission Network contributed a grant to help offset the cost of the event.

Jeff Wright, southern California church planter, pastor and former Pacific Southwest conference minister, spoke from the Gospel of John about transcending the culture of fear and living the incarnation in church planting. He also pointed to how church planters on the edges of the church model Jesus' work on the margins of his culture.

"The margin sees the incarnation, but the center can't see it," Wright said. "It's not that we ignore the center, but we challenge them: 'You must be born again.' Jesus was helping Nicodemus think about what real transformation is. It's not about helping good, middle-class people become better middle-class people. You have to start over."

Josef Berthold, pastor at West End Mennonite Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa., asked about the relationship between established churches and new church plants and the ways they can work together, changing the metaphor of old and new wineskins into one of a wine cellar, where all can coexist.

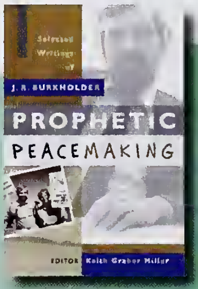
Wright carried the wine cellar metaphor further.

"Area conferences create a climate so that churches can become what they are called to become," Wright said. The denomination should not try to get churches on board with what it's doing, Wright explained, but should instead align itself with what congregations are already doing.

"The job of denominations and conferences," he said, "is to create environments where every 'bottle of wine' can thrive."

And money isn't the answer—at least not in terms of subsidizing the church plant. But conferences should spend

Herald Press



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money on resources, gatherings and special projects, said Wright.

Church planters in attendance seemed to agree.

"Gatherings like this are what's needed," said T.J. Tennefoss of Grace Fellowship in Greenwood, Del. "To be able to sit in places like this and realize that your ideas aren't so different from anyone else's and that the Holy Spirit's prompting is happening in other places."

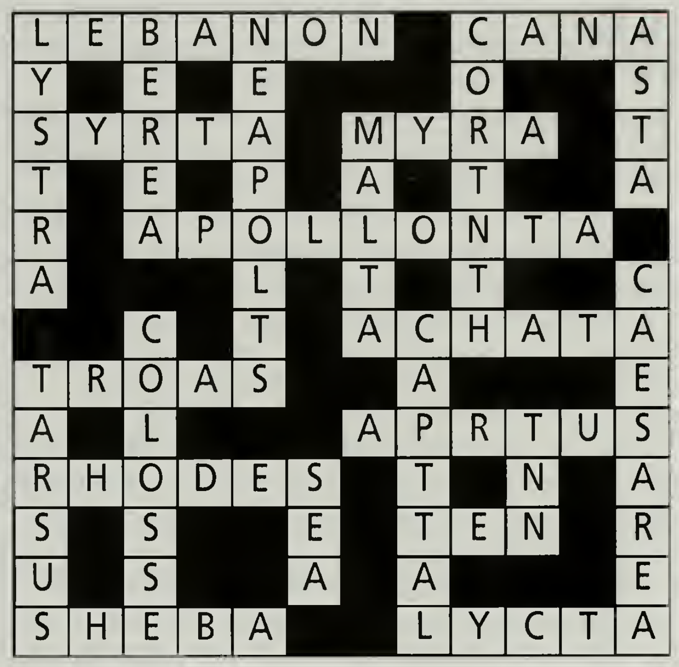
Church planters called for relationships with conference and denominational leaders, too.

"Just as we're supposed to be incarnational with the people we meet, that's what I want as support from leadership—to know me and walk with me," said LaVonne Yoder, who is part of a community fellowship of small groups, called Circle of Grace, in Milton, Pa.

The event ended with time for questions and discussion about future joint events, including church planter training clusters and a possible Spanish-language gathering. André Gingerich Stoner, director of holistic witness and interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA, closed with a commissioning and sending time.

"Church planting revitalizes congregations," said Wright. "Institution and improvisation are the right and left feet of the church. If we're going to move with the Spirit of God, we're going to need both."—*Melanie Hess for* The Mennonite

Answers to the page 61 puzzle



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MCC U.S. forms antiracism advisory council

Ten people to advise Mennonite Central Committee anti-racism coordinator

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. fulfilled a long-term goal in May when it established an advisory council for its antiracism coordinator. The Community Reference Council (CRC) will advise the coordinator in the development and implementation of an antiracist vision and plan for MCC U.S. and its regional offices.

Members also will encourage and empower the coordinator, while holding that person accountable to ensure that people of color are heard in organizational decisions.

Rick Derksen of Lancaster, Pa., and a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, is the anti-racism coordinator for MCC U.S. and for the binational MCC.

"CRC can provide important perspectives on MCC's internal decision-making," said Wanda González-Coleman of New Holland, Pa., the chair of CRC, which is composed primarily of people of color.

The council can also influence MCC U.S. supporters in their thinking about racism, said González-Coleman, a member of Iglesia Menonita Jesucristo es el Señor, New Holland, Pa.

In addition to González-Coleman, members of the council include the following:

- Michelle Armster, vice chair, co-director of conflict transformation for MCC U.S.;
- Keshia Littlebear, recording secretary, MCC Central States antiracism team member;
- J. Ron Byler, MCC U.S. executive director;
- Ricardo Esquivia, Mennonite Church, Colombia;
- Valentina Satvedi, director of MCC U.S. antiracism program;
- John Stoesz, MCC Central States executive director.

Three positions remain open.

As part of staff, the antiracism coordinator works with MCC U.S. to become a more fully antiracist and multicultural organization. The coordinator's role is distinguished from the MCC U.S. antiracism program, which provides antiracism education and resources from an Anabaptist perspective.

More information about the MCC U.S. antiracism program can be found at http://antiracism.mcc.org/.—*MCC*

MEDA
Position Announcement
Chief MEDA Engagement Officer

Due to our success and growth, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) invites applications for a full-time Chief MEDA Engagement Officer. MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) is an association of compassionate business women and men who invest in people living in poverty around the world so they can unleash their potential to earn a livelihood to provide for their families and enrich their communities. (www.meda.org) We invite you to join our team of innovative, entrepreneurial professionals dedicated to finding business solutions to poverty.

Position Summary

The Chief MEDA Engagement Officer (CMEO) provides executive-level strategic leadership to engage MEDA's association of private supporters with our mission; secure financial contributions that leverage other sources of funding; protect and enhance MEDA's image; and expand awareness of MEDA in diverse market segments. A member of MEDA's Executive Leadership Team, the CMEO will lead a staff of senior professionals to develop and implement the MEDA Engagement strategic plan and annual budget.

The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of implementing successful marketing strategies and an understanding of fundraising, particularly within the Anabaptist community. With a keen interest in MEDA's approach to finding business solutions to poverty, and desire to engage others in this vision, the CMEO will participate in speaking engagements, media appearances, and visits to key members of the constituency.

A full time opportunity, with a strong preference to be based in the Waterloo, Ontario MEDA office, this position will involve regular domestic and international travel. This unique position is a chance to use your significant leadership and technical expertise to make a difference.

Qualifications:

- Minimum of ten years successful executive leadership and senior staff management.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and leading successful marketing campaigns for a variety of audiences.
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of MEDA's constituency (Mennonite, Anabaptist and Christian business and professionals).
- Background and understanding of fundraising, especially in the development of major gift proposals. Familiarity with the Moves Management system is preferable.
- Highly motivated, self-starter, and results-oriented.
- Excellent and proven interpersonal skills in team leadership, relationship building, active listening, communicating, and negotiation.
- Understanding and appreciation of international development and MEDA's approach of finding business solutions to poverty.
- Appreciation and support of MEDA's faith, values and goals.

Please submit resume to: ***jobs@meda.org***

New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC

Lee Snyder's ***At Powerline and Diamond Hill: Unexected Intersections of Life and Work*** is "As profoundly spiritual as Thomas Merton and Kathleen Norris," says *Shirley H. Showalter.* 204 p $14.95

An American in Persia: A Pilgrimage to Iran, Richard A. Kauffman. "A must for all who want to build friendship with people our government would have us consider enemies." —*David Cortright.* 130 p $12.95

A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity. *Sara Wenger Shenk* sees Dawn Ruth Nelson as "Rooting Mennonite spirituality within the earthy settledness of her grandmother's story." 184 p $18.95

All available Amazon.com, BN.com

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1-215-723-9125

CALENDAR

Men's Retreat at **Camp Friedenswald** is Nov. 12-14. All men ages 12+ are invited to come and participate in fellowship, worship, great food, sports and men's chorus. www.friedenswald.org

The fourth ***Sarasota Mennonite Male Voice Music Festival***, with Lloyd Kauffman as director, is being planned for 2011 with **Bahia Vista Mennonite Church** again serving as host. Practices will be held on Jan. 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 10, 7-9 p.m.; Feb. 12, 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m.; Feb. 13, 2-4 p.m. The program will be presented Feb. 13, 6 p.m. All men who enjoy singing to God's glory are invited to participate. E-mail pwenger4@com-cast.net or call 941-870-3737.

WORKERS

Blank, William, began a term as intentional interim at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Carlson, Jon, was licensed toward ordination and installed as pastor at Oley Valley Mennonite Church, Oley, Pa., on May 7.

Carrion, Sonni, was licensed for specific ministry and installed as oversight minister for the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches, New York, N.Y., on April 23.

Claassen, Amy, was licensed at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan., on July 18, for specialized ministry for chaplaincy work.

Gashco-Cooke, Susan, was installed as lead pastor at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa., on May 31.

Henson, Jon, was licensed toward ordination and installed as associate pastor at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa., on June 6.

Hoover, Jacqueline, was licensed as consultant on inter-religious relations at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Aug. 15.

Horst, Tom, ended a term as lead pastor at Landis Valley Christian Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Kanagy, Curtiss, ended a term as lead pastor at New Danville Mennonite Church, New Danville, Pa., on Aug. 1.

Kopper, Ryan, was licensed at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan., on Aug. 15, as associate pastor of youth and young adult ministries.

Landis, Steve, began a term as pastoral team leader at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa., on Aug. 1.

Linares, Confesor, was installed as pastor at Iglesia Menonita Primera, Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 12.

Miller, Joseph L., was licensed as chaplain at Tel Hai Retirement Community, Honey Brook, Pa., on May 7.

Miller, Mark L., was licensed as associate pastor at Emmanuel's House of Prayer, Healing and Hope, Reinholds, Pa., on Aug. 22.

Patterson, Jeremy, was ordained on Oct. 3 at Journey @ Yoder, Yoder, Kan., as associate pastor of South Hutchinson Mennonite Church. Journey @ Yoder is a satellite campus.

Perez, Sandra, was licensed for specific ministry and installed as oversight minister for the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches, New York, N.Y., on April 23.

Ralph, James, was installed as pastor at Ark Bible Chapel, Boyertown, Pa., on June 27.

Rauschenberger, Elizabeth, was ordained as pastor of congregational care at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., on Oct. 3.

Roth, Scott, was ordained as pastor at New Eden Fellowship, Schwenksville, Pa., on Oct. 3.

Shertzer, Will, ended a term as intentional interim at Mount Joy Mennonite Church, Mount Joy, Pa., on Aug. 15.

Wanjau, Samuel, was ordained as pastor at the African Community Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa., on Aug. 31.

Weidner, Mark, began a term as bridge pastor at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Oct. 1.

Yoder, Ray, ended a term as intentional interim pastor at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Sept. 30.

Yutzy, Luann, was licensed as co-pastor at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

OBITUARIES

Andriotis, Carol Maxine Rinkenberger, 82, Tiskilwa, Ill., died July 31. Spouse: Constance John Andriotis (deceased). Parents: Clarence and Minnie Householder Ronkenberger. Children: John, James, Susan Rush, Sandy Momoki, Peter; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

Bare, Olive M., 90, Newton, Kan., died Aug. 7. Parents: Joseph H. and Ida Bauer Bare. Funeral: Aug. 12 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Beck, Anna Ruth Weaver, 85, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 6. Spouse: Howard H. Beck (deceased). Parents: Reuben M. and Lucinda Ella Neuhauser Weaver. Children: Duane, Marlene Yoder; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Bender, Lloyd I., 85, Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 25. Spouse: Barbara Stutzman Bender (deceased). Parents: Ira and Lena Miller Bender. Children: Derald, Dwight, Delwyn, Darlene Gingerich; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Closson, Harold, 72, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 4. Spouse: Margie Gerber Closson. Parents: George Sr., and Mary Catherine Meeks Closson. Children: Kaye Phillips, Timothy Closson; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Conrad, Nancy Rebekah Hernley, Goshen, Ind., 91, died Aug. 29. Spouse: Paul L. Conrad (deceased). Parents: Henry and Daisy Cutrell Hernley. Children: Glenn, Mary Lo, Paul; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Detweiler, Betty King, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Aaron King. Parents: Elmer and Lillian Detweiler. Children: Michael, Jewel King, Robert, Steven Weibe-King, Marty, Noel King, Starla King; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

Harder, Aganetha S., 99, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Sept. 3. Spouse: Henry Milton Harder (deceased). Children: Edna Andres, Marjorie Baerg, Leroy Harder. Deceased children: Sylvia Chaika, Henry Alan Harder; 10 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at First Mennoniite Church, Mountain Lake.

Hiebner, George G., 94 Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 17. Spouse: Matilda Hiebner (deceased). Parents: Gerhard and Aganetha Hiebner. Children: LaRoy Hiebner and Roberta Bergen; five grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 21 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

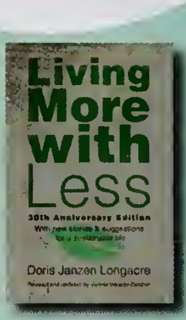
Hottinger, Noah, 79, Linville, Va., died Sept. 4. Parents: Jesse L. and Bertha Southerly Hottinger. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

Kauffman, Roy I., 98, Tiskilwa, Ill., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Helen Nafziger Kauffman. Spouse: Eunice Albrecht Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Noah Daniel and Katherine Egli Kauffman. Children: George, Susan Kauffman Cater; eight grandchildren; 26 step-grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; 11 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

King, Mary Mae Zook, 98, Belleville, Pa., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Samuel H. King (deceased). Parents: Jacob S. and Fannie R. Yoder Zook. Children: Jesse W., Ivan R., David T., Leah Harbst, Gary L., Lee G., Freddie R.; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; 12 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Kroeker, Shirley Fehr, 72, Gnadenfeld, Altona, Manitoba, died Sept. 18. Spouse: John Kroeker. Parents: Henry and Justine Falk Fehr. Children: Cindy Heinrichs, Valerie Friesen, Sandra Bergen; five grandchildren; three-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Martin, E. Naomi, 89, Akron, Pa., died Sept. 11. Parents: Aaron G. Maggie Sauder Martin. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Ephrata Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa.



Herald Press

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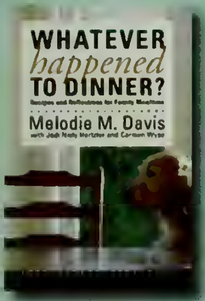
WHATEVER happened TO DINNER?
Melodie M. Davis

Whatever Happened to Dinner?
Recipes and Reflections for Family Mealtime
Melodie M. Davis

Part cookbook, part reflection on the changing role of dinner in our culture and part celebration of family and community—that's what you'll find in *Whatever Happened to Dinner?* Author **Melodie Davis** invites people to eat together, even as she acknowledges the challenges of living in a culture that often pulls us apart.

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800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Martin, Martha Mae Weaver, 90, Columbiana, Ohio, died Sept. 6. Spouse: Ira E. Martin (deceased). Parents: Noah and Fannie Martin Weaver. Children: Lowell, Ronald, Lawrence, Naomi "Molly" Hostetler, Lucille Clark, Charlotte Beck, Kathy Schroedel, Carol Moser; 16 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Martin, Onias B., 89, Woolwich Township, Ontario, died Sept. 9. Spouse: Minerva Bauman Scheifele Hoffman Martin (deceased). Parents: Amos B. and Elvina Bauman Martin. Step-children: Gordon Scheifele, Willard Scheifele, Nelson Scheifele, Pearl Jutzi; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 12 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Miller, Mary Etta Yoder, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 25. Spouse: Leander Miller (deceased). Spouse: Daniel Frye (deceased). Parents: Eli S. and Savilla Schmucker Yoder. Children: Rosa Mary Newton, Treva Yoder, Danette Miller; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 28 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Patterson, Katheryne Lugibill, 99, Bluffton, Ohio, died May 18. Spouse: Don Patterson (deceased). Parents: Albert and Anna Leichty Lugibill. Children: Connie Kear, Nancy Fruchey, Don; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 30 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Raber, Mary Milster Mitchell, 88, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Sept. 6 following a prolonged illness. Spouse: Ernest Raber. Parents: Mason Edward and Dora Otis Mitchell. Children: Chris, Eric, Mark, Philip; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek.

Redcay, Grace E. Brooks, 90. Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 15. Spouse: Elmer Redcay (deceased). Parents: Elmer and Mary Miller Brooks. Children: Robert, Jacqueline Evers, Brenda Dalziel; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 Forester Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Savanick, Ferne E. Hernley, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 22. Spouse: Paul Savanick (deceased). Parents: Henry and Daisy Cutrell Hernley. Children: Rosetta Brown, Elsa Works, Eli Michael; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Scottdale Mennonite Church, Scottdale, Pa.

Showalter, Truman Francis, 90, Waynesboro, Va., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Mildred Showalter. Parents: Amos and Lillie Showalter. Children: Esther Showalter, Irene Wade, Erla Showalter, Dennis Showalter, Sharon Showalter, Ernest Showalter, Kenneth Showalter, Carolyn Bontrager; 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Steiner, Lester, 80, Kidron, Ohio, died Sept. 8 following complications from heart problems. Spouse: Esther Amstutz Steiner. Parents: Albert and Minnie Steiner. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Summer, Marjorie Stalter, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Milton G. Summer (deceased). Parents: Daniel D. and Alice Miller Stalter. Children: Shelby Morrisey, Ardis King, Sharon Axline; seven grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; nine great-step-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Waltner, Esther Elva Wedel, 87, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 25. Spouse: Caroll J. Waltner (deceased). Parents: Peter P. and Emma Kaufman Wedel. Child: Jorigiann Waltner Glubka. Funeral: Sept. 23 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Wenger, Eric R., 41, Columbiana, Ohio, died Sept. 10 of a stroke. Parents: Glen and Ethel Wenger. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Living Branches is a not-for-profit system of retirement living communities dedicated to providing life-enriching services at its Dock Meadows, Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods locations. Located on beautiful grounds in suburban Philadelphia, they provide residential/independent living, personal care and nursing-care services, guided by the Mennonite heritage of Christian values. We are currently looking for a ***director of fund development*** who will be responsible for planning, organizing and managing fund development for Living Branches. The qualified candidate must have thorough knowledge of the local communities surrounding the campuses and have significant experience in fund-raising and donor cultivation within a not-for-profit organization. Qualified candidates should send a cover letter, including salary requirements, along with their resumés to Sarah.Reilley@LivingBranches.org for consideration.

The **Gather 'Round** curriculum, a project of Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press, is accepting applications to write for the 2012–13 year. ***Writers*** are hired for one or two quarters for a particular age unit: Preschool, Primary, Middler, Multiage, Junior Youth or Youth. Writers produce well-written, age-appropriate and engaging material for teacher's guides, student books and resource packs. All writers will attend an orientation conference March 6–10, 2011, in Chicago. For more information, visit the Job Opportunities page at www.gatherround.org. Deadline for applications: Jan. 1, 2011.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for a full-time ***instructional services librarian*** position. This position provides leadership for EMU's instructional program and development of teaching tools, reference functions and collection development. MLS degree required. Graduate degree in another discipline highly desirable, with a preference for studies in composition and rhetoric. Experience in a college or university library desired. Teaching skills, technical expertise in database searching and web tools, and strong collaborative and interpersonal skills essential. Supportive of the mission and policies of Eastern Mennonite University. Position begins immediately. Twelve-month, full-time position. Submit application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to: hr@emu.edu. For more information visit our website at www.emu.edu/humanresources. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Lovely house for sale in beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Va. Part of a farm partnership with registered herd of grass-fed Black Angus, 10 miles from EMU. For more information and pictures go to www.foresalebyowner.com listing ID 22775592 or zip code 22832. Call 540-269-4106 or e-mail brennet98@gmail.com.

MDC Goldenrod, a developmental disabilities provider, seeks an ***executive director*** in Goshen, Ind. Requirements include BS/BA, five years experience in a health/human services field, administrative skills and board experience. Contact Kirk Stiffney at kirk@stiffneygroup.com or 574-537-8736.

Bluffton University invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty position in ***social work*** beginning fall 2011. MSW degree from accredited social work program and minimum of two years of practice experience is required. Ph.D. or ABD preferred. Should demonstrate effective teaching skills and have experience. Teach a range of courses, including human behavior in the social environment, micro practice and social welfare. Ability to teach courses in sociology and/or criminal justice a plus. Responsibilities of all faculty include student advising and teaching courses in the general education curriculum, which emphasizes an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to the liberal arts and sciences. Scholarship is supported and service activities with community/church are encouraged. Review of applications begins Dec. 1 and continues until an appointment is made. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu for additional details. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Director of financial services for **MCC U.S.** MCC shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ. The director of financial services is the chief financial officer of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S., including its four regional offices. The position will build the capacity of MCC U.S., financial services to provide accounting expertise and financial management and create financial systems, in collaboration with the MCC (binational) director of financial services during the New Wine/New Wineskins restructuring period. The position directs financial operation for multiple offices, keeps staff and board members informed of the financial status of MCC U.S. and furnishes financial data to offices and departments. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree or related experience; CPA or equivalent related experience; 5-7 years accounting/financial services experience with complex organizational structures; experience with nonprofit finances. All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Position based in Akron, Pa., or a regional office. MCC is committed to employment equity and values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply. See complete job description at http://mcc.org/serve/positions/director-financial-services-mcc-us. Submit letter of intent, resumé and formal application online or to Director of Human Resources, MCC U.S., 1013 Division Street, Goshen, IN 46528, by Nov. 7, 2010.

Ski Timberline, W.Va.; $99 complete 2-day ski package now extended through Dec. 26-27. 2 nights: bunkhouse lodging, lift ticket, regular ski rental, beginner ski lesson, 5 meals; 800-392-0152.

Everence

Photo: Claybottom Farms, Goshen, Ind by John Tirotta

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Everence offers banking products that are federally insured. We also offer securities and other products that are not NCUA insured, may involve loss of principal, and have no credit union guarantee. Not all products are available in all states.

210-345

Confessions of a mellowed preacher

Sharon Kniss attends Early Church, a Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg, Va.

I used to preach. Not in front of churches from a pulpit, although I did that on occasion, too, but in speeches, articles and conversations. I would loudly assert my intelligence through big words and convincing facts I cherry-picked and covered it all with an emotional pull, declaring our moral obligation. I would preach against war, destruction of the environment, economic injustice, exploitation, oil-dependence and waste, to name a few. I would speak for peace, environmental conservation, living wages and affordable housing, human rights, alternative energy, reusing and recycling. Honestly, I would speak loudly on most subjects if the opportunity presented itself—I had abundant opinions on the church and theology and how we should best be the church, about higher education and organizational systems, about the U.S. political system and large businesses that monopolized trade at the expense of workers and the environment. I was passionate for what was good in the world and passionately against what I felt was wrong in the world.

My outspoken nature likely led the editors of *The Mennonite* to ask me to contribute to this column. This being my third and final piece in 2010, I am deciding whether to continue next year. My first column spoke of living in the present moment, and my second spoke about being human, neither very "preachy." I considered whether it was time to preach, perhaps about what's right and wrong with the church and how it should be changed. I know many people are eager to hear a young adult's perspective. I wrote a draft of that article, but I couldn't submit it—that's not me right now.

> I'm not preaching anymore because I'm too busy putting one foot in front of the other, trying to live with integrity.

Over the last year, as I've transitioned from living in London to Harrisonburg, Va., I've experienced what I call the "downward spiral of grace." I've suffered discomfort, depression, loneliness and aching confusion and chaos. I have felt wounded and weak emotionally, mentally and spiritually. The transition from London wasn't the only cause for this, but it did serve as a catalyst for my journey through darkness. I've discovered that the downward spiral I experienced and am still experiencing was and is in some ways a spiral of grace. The spiral crushed my overinflated opinion of myself and my accomplishments and crushed any weak supports I had constructed for myself that weren't built on solid rock. The downward spiral, despite its unwelcome intrusion and accompanying pain, provided me with opportunities to purge what is not healthy, what is not from God, what does not promote life.

This "downward spiral of grace" is probably one of many reasons why I don't preach much these days. As I've settled in Virginia, I'm also now surrounded by the very people for whom I advocated when I preached. With a new job and new neighborhood, I now work and live alongside those struggling daily with poverty and violence. My community includes those who experienced trauma from which they may never fully heal. I eat lunch with friends who struggle with loneliness, pain and chaos on a daily basis. I try to walk with people drowned in alcoholism or lost in a cycle of any number of addictive behaviors. I've found my brothers and sisters that I didn't have time for before and am learning I need them, just as much as I need my more stable friends. Through my community I have been blessed to see and experience a fuller demonstration of the kingdom of God.

Through these experiences and likely many others I haven't yet considered, I have mellowed significantly and am often now listening more than preaching. I certainly haven't lost my passion, but my actions and responses have changed. Maybe one day I'll preach again. Preachers are needed. But in the meantime, I'm sure others will take my place and provide the needed passionate voice of advocacy for justice and peace.

I agreed to contribute to this column in part because I appreciated the ego boost and the platform to preach. It's easy for me to preach, and my ego loves receiving the praise and strong reactions to a good "sermon" I preach. That's why it's hard for me to write this unglamorous article. But I'd like to be done with my ego now. I'm not preaching anymore because I'm too busy putting one foot in front of the other, trying to live with integrity in my own actions—converting my big words into small actions I take every day.

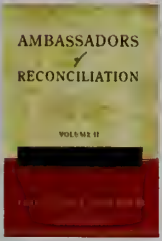
Holy God, grant me your wisdom and strength as I journey this downward spiral of grace.

FILM REVIEWS

Restrepo (R) is a gripping documentary covering an army unit's year under intense fighting in Afghanistan. The title derives from a remote, 15-man outpost named for medic Juan "Doc" Restrepo, who was shot and bled to death on the way to medical treatment. The film betrays no political slant and shows both the courage and camaraderie of the men and the savagery of war and the painful isolation of post-traumatic stress disorder.—*Gordon Houser*

The Social Network (PG-13) depicts the Harvard student who created Facebook, Mark Zuckerburg, now a billionaire. It shows the spirals of greed and the complicated nature of intellectual property theft. It paints the young entrepreneurs competing for recognition as morally ambiguous but washes over ethical questions.—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS



Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Volume 1: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking by Ched Myers and Elaine Enns (Orbis Books, 2009, $16) and **Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Volume 2: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking** by Elaine Enns and Ched Myers (Orbis Books, 2009, $20) are excellent resources on their own but particularly recommended for all delegates to the Mennonite Church USA assembly in Pittsburgh next July. Vol. I is filled with biblical insights and insists that we read both Paul's writings and the Gospels in their sociohistorical context. It also relates this biblical teaching to the work of Martin Luther King Jr. Vol. II considers models for integral restorative justice and peacemaking in North America and looks at contemporary pioneers of such work.—*gh*

The Christian Harry Potter

Remember Harry Potter? It's been three years since the last book in J.K. Rowling's seven-volume opus of 4,100-plus pages was published.

Now books are coming out evaluating the series as Christian literature. Two of the newest ones are *One Fine Potion: The Literary Magic of Harry Potter* by Greg Garrett (Baylor University Press) and *Baptizing Harry Potter: A Christian Reading of J.K. Rowling* by Luke Bell (Paulist Press).

Both books laud Rowling as a writer who employs Christian themes throughout the series though without much overt Christian language. As each of them points out, only two Bible verses are referred to in the books, Matthew 6:21 and 1 Corinthians 15:26, though these are significant and point to major themes in the novels.

Garrett notes how popular the Harry Potter series is, that it "is one of the three most popular literary works in history, outsold to date only by the Bible and Mao's *Little Red Book*." It has also been controversial, as many Christians have denounced the books as "promoting witchcraft, Satanism and antisocial behavior." They have also been attacked by conservative Muslims and others and banned from many libraries and schools.

These two books counter such criticism, though Garrett gives it more attention. He tells of an interview he did with an evangelical British radio station in 2008. At one point the radio host said he didn't understand why Garrett had written positively about the Harry Potter films when "everyone knows that Harry Potter is Satanic." Garrett referred him to an interview Rowling gave to *Time* magazine, after the final book came out, in which "she talked about how her Christian faith had informed the entire Harry Potter story." He told the host that Rowling is an active member of the Church of Scotland and that when you look at the Potter story, "you can see how it has the same shape as the gospel story: sacrifice, death, resurrection, redemption."

Rowling herself, in response to such criticism, has said: "I'm not a witch. I'm a writer of children's fantasy. … I don't believe in magic. It's a device in my stories, nothing more."

Garrett sums it up thus: "A responsible reading of the element of magic in Harry Potter shows that ultimately it is about power—how it is employed and how it should not be employed."

These two books go to great lengths to show the many Christian themes present in the Potter saga. Garrett, a professor of English at Baylor University, concentrates on four major themes (with these labels): (1) magic, power and the fantastic; (2) community, diversity and formation; (3) heroism, good and evil; (4) faith, hope and the world to come.

Bell, a Benedictine monk at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight, in his 10 chapters, looks at the structure of the series, going beyond the normal, good against evil, life and death, power and weakness, love and sacrifice, freedom and determination, the hidden and the ostentatious, the struggle for truth, and purity of heart and purity of blood.

While the insights in these books are helpful, they sometimes overreach, for example, when Garrett tries to relate certain characters to the Holy Trinity or when both authors relate Dumbledore to God. And the lengthy discussion of the Christian themes in the books can detract from the enjoyment of a tale well told, which is really what the Harry Potter books are.

The Harry Potter series is primarily a story, not a lesson. But its themes clearly resonate with the gospel.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

SEPTEMBER 2010 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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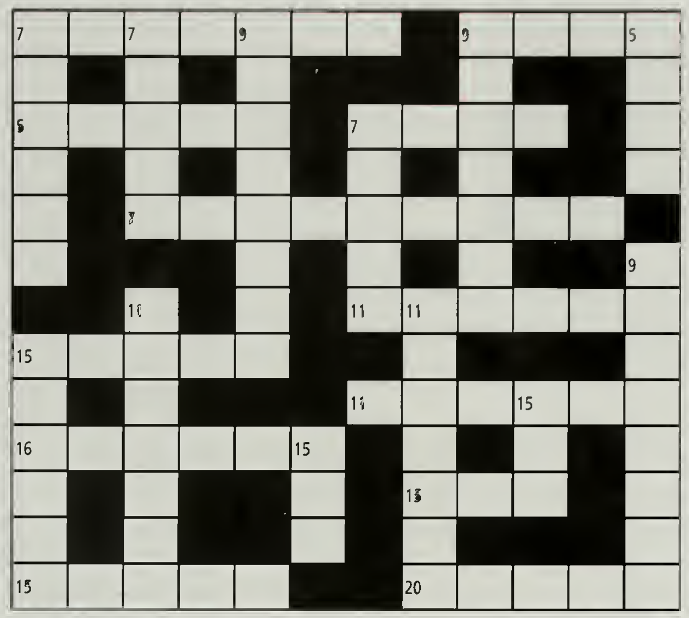
New Testament places

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. Tyre and Sidon are located in this modern day country, though few cedars remain.
4. Site of Jesus' first miracle.
6. Region in which Saul/Paul experienced his conversion (Acts 9).
7. When Paul was a prisoner, he was transferred at this port city to an Alexandrian ship to take him to Rome (Acts 27:5).
8. Paul and Silas passed through this Greek city on their way to Thessalonica on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1).
11. The Roman name for Greece; Paul went before the proconsul Gallio of this country, but Gallio refused to hear the case (Acts 18:12).
13. City where Paul saw a vision of a man of Macedonia and later healed Eutychus when he fell out of a window (Acts 16:8 and 20:9).
14. Forum of ____ (Acts 28:15).
16. Island and city on a major shipping route; Paul stopped here during his third journey (Acts 21:1).
18. The name Decapolis (Mt. 4:25; Mk. 7:31) means this many cities.
19. Jesus refers to the queen of this region in the South coming to Solomon, "and now one greater than Solomon is here." (Mt. 12:42; 1Kings 10:1).
20. Paul stopped at two cities in this region: Patara and Myra (Acts 27:5).

DOWN

1. Home of Timothy (Acts 16).
2. Paul said the people of this Macedonian city were of more noble character than the Thessalonians because they studied the Scriptures every day (Acts 17).
3. From Troas, Paul sailed to Samothrace and then on to _______, a Macedonian seaport (Acts 16:11).
4. A very wealthy, important trade city for Greece; Paul met Aquila and Priscilla here.
5. ___ Minor.
7. Paul was shipwrecked on this island.
9. _______ Philippi, the northernmost point of Jesus' ministry (Mt. 16:13).
10. Paul wrote a letter to the church in this Asia Minor city near Laodicea.
12. Athens was the ____ city of Attica, ancient Greece. Paul visited here on his second journey (Acts 17).
13. Birthplace of Paul.
15. There was no room here for Mary and Joseph.
17. The ___ of Galilee.

RECOGNITION

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ANSWERS TO THIS PUZZLE
MAY BE FOUND ON PAGE 51

(Continued from page 5)

He claims God founded the church on the office of the apostolic ministry. Becoming "missional" is pointing us in the right direction, providing Jesus is at the center.

The September column picked up on the Philippian's generous response to the needy in Jerusalem. The secret: "They first gave themselves to the Lord." What an essential ingredient for the church today, whose goal is to be more missional. Generosity helps churches grow physically and spiritually.—*Eugene K. Souder, Grottoes, Va.*

A great Father's Day

The Royce and Betty Engle article in the June issue (page 24) was the beginning of something wonderful for me. I apologize that it took me this long to write to you to share my story.

During World War II, my father, Paul Bender, was in a Civilian Public Service camp with Royce in Terry, Mont. I knew Royce had retired in the early 1980s, and my father passed away in 2009. After reading the article about Royce, I wrote him a letter and included a copy of a training certificate he had signed for me in 1975, as well as a current business card.

On Father's Day I received a phone call from a number I was unfamiliar with. It was Royce calling, and we had a wonderful 30-minute conversation about things past and present. It was like God had reached out to me through Royce to bring good memories of a great father, and the really special part was that it happened on Father's Day.

Thanks for your part in making Father's Day 2010 special for me.—*John Bender, Greensboro, N.C.*

Wine vs beer

One of the scientifically interesting stories in the Bible is Jesus' first miracle: turning water into wine, as reported in John 2. One gallon of water was required to make one gallon of wine. This represents a substantial improvement over the amount reported in the September note in Miscellany that indicated 17 gallons of water are required to make a gallon of wine and only seven gallons of water to brew a gallon of beer.

Wine is carefully fermented grape juice (i.e. one gallon of grape juice makes about one gallon of wine). Under ideal conditions, very little water would be needed. Beer, in contrast, during the brewing process requires that each gallon of beer must contain nearly one gallon of water, as there is no such thing as "beer juice." So it would seem that brewing beer would require more water than making wine.

However, when sanitation, bottle washing and other process steps are included, the total swells to at best 3.45 gallons of water per gallon of beer. Average breweries consume six to eight gallons of water per gallon of beer.
—*Lew Naylor, Goshen, Ind.*

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First things first First go and be reconciled

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift."—Matthew 5:23-24 (TNIV)

When I read the Gospels, it's easy to see that Jesus' followers didn't always agree and disagree in love. As Jesus walked the dusty roads with his disciples, he heard them talk about who was the greatest and saw occasional flashes of anger. Perhaps on occasion, the "sons of thunder" blasted a companion on the journey with a lightning-quick retort that stung to the heart.

Because the disciples didn't always get along, Jesus spoke of the need for forgiveness, turning the other cheek and reconciliation. In an appeal to keep first things first, Jesus instructed them to first seek reconciliation with others, then offer their oblations to God.

As I reflect on Jesus' instruction, I wonder why Jesus assigned such urgency to the task of reconciliation. Didn't he realize that relationships are often messy? Didn't he recognize that reconciliation can be a long drawn-out process? If everyone would take Jesus seriously, temple gifts could soon accumulate in piles around the altar, awaiting the day when estranged parties came to agreement.

Jesus surely knew that reconciliation is messy. It takes concerted effort and always awaits someone who is willing to take the first step. Jesus knew that if his disciples blamed others for their relational problems, or waited for someone else to make all the changes one desired, reconciliation would remain a distant or impossible goal. He knew that we can't change other people, but we can change the way we relate to them. We can make sure we treat others as we would want to be treated.

Jesus knew that true worship has a way of bringing broken relationships to mind. Like sunbeams on the forest floor, God's Spirit can shed light on the anger and resentments hidden in the shadows of our lives.

In his instructions to his disciples about faith that could move mountains, Jesus spoke of forgiveness. "And when you stand praying," Jesus said, "if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins" (Mark 11:25). Surely the flow of the Spirit is blocked by unforgiveness. Withholding forgiveness can block the flow of our prayers.

Jesus made it clear that forgiveness need not be mutual to be effective. Forgiveness can be a unilateral move, offered to the offender without needing to agree on the nature of the wrong. It could help move at least one party move toward reconciliation, a gift of grace that requires an agreement from both estranged parties.

As Christians who long for peace, we do well to take Jesus' teaching to heart. When we worship God with honesty and openness, the Spirit may nudge us about a relationship that needs to be reconciled. At times like these, we can begin with a prayer of forgiveness, releasing our brother or sister from our judgment. This act of release frees the Holy Spirit to pave the way for reconciliation through the grace of God.

Jesus surely knew that reconciliation is messy.

At the convention in Pittsburgh next July, we will study 2 Corinthians 5:16-20. In this theme passage, the Apostle Paul speaks eloquently of the ministry of reconciliation. We have been reconciled to God, Paul declares, and he has given us the ministry of reconciliation. A church that is full of resentments and anger blocks the path of reconciliation to God.

That's why Jesus taught the importance of keeping first things first. When an offense has separated a brother or sister from you, first go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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Our turn to ask forgiveness

Everett J. Thomas

We as Europeans basically annihilated the Susquehannocks, who were here, and to the rest of the tribes we committed acts that scattered them across the nation. Any way I can connect to the past as a European and a Mennonite and a Christian, I ask for forgiveness.—Lloyd Hoover

If our forefathers heard what we are talking about here, they'd be dancing for joy.—Gray Wolf

On July 22, the Lutheran World Federation asked Mennonites for forgiveness for the Lutherans' treatment of Anabaptists in Europe beginning in the 16th century. Now it is time for some Mennonites with roots in North America to ask for forgiveness from the people who lived on this land before our forebears arrived.

Lloyd Hoover did just that. He represented the Mennonite church on a committee planning the Oct. 9 "Public Acknowledgement and Commemoration of the Native American Legacy" in Lancaster, Pa. (see page 42). Hoover's statement and the response from Gray Wolf, an Apache man, came in a Sept. 23 release from the committee.

Learn something about the people who lived on the land before our houses and roads existed.

November has been designated Native American Awareness Month, and at least one Mennonite high school has planned activities to raise awareness. But we cannot find an explanation why this month was chosen. Perhaps it is because of the legends that focus on the first Thanksgiving—when people who lived here first provided food for the Pilgrims.

Coincidentally this year, Native voices have been increasingly prominent in both Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. In July at the Native Assembly in Montana, a Cree leader called on the church to listen to indigenous voices. The group also traveled to the Little Bighorn Battlefield, where George Custer and his U.S. cavalry were prevented from attacking a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux men, women and children. The Native American account of the battle differs significantly from what is usually recorded in U.S. textbooks.

Mennonite Church Canada has been even more intentional about examining its history than has Mennonite Church USA. At their July assembly, delegates learned how Canadian Mennonites may have been complicit in the Indian Residential School system, which sought to eradicate First Nations cultures. Although neither Mennonite Church Canada nor its predecessor, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, operated any residential schools, some members of their congregations supported the schools and volunteered in them. The delegates acknowledged this complicity and "destructive individual attitudes, such as paternalism, racism and superiority, are still present among us."

For me, the Lancaster event hits closest to home—literally. My ancestors arrived in Penns Woods in 1747 and established the Adam Thomas farm in southern Lancaster County. At my home, eight miles away, we found arrow and hatchet heads. Although that land was originally granted to William Penn by indigenous tribes that shared his vision for a peaceful coexistence, it is clear that my part of the Mennonite church did too little to resist later abuses and attacks.

One small way for all of us to observe Native American Awareness Month is to learn something about the people who lived on the land before our houses and roads and towns existed. Then at our Thanksgiving meal we can offer a prayer of confession for any complicity we and our ancestors may have had in annihilating them.—*ejt*

Website poll results

I personally know a Native American Mennonite:
(113 votes)
Yes - 58%
No - 39%
Not sure - 4%

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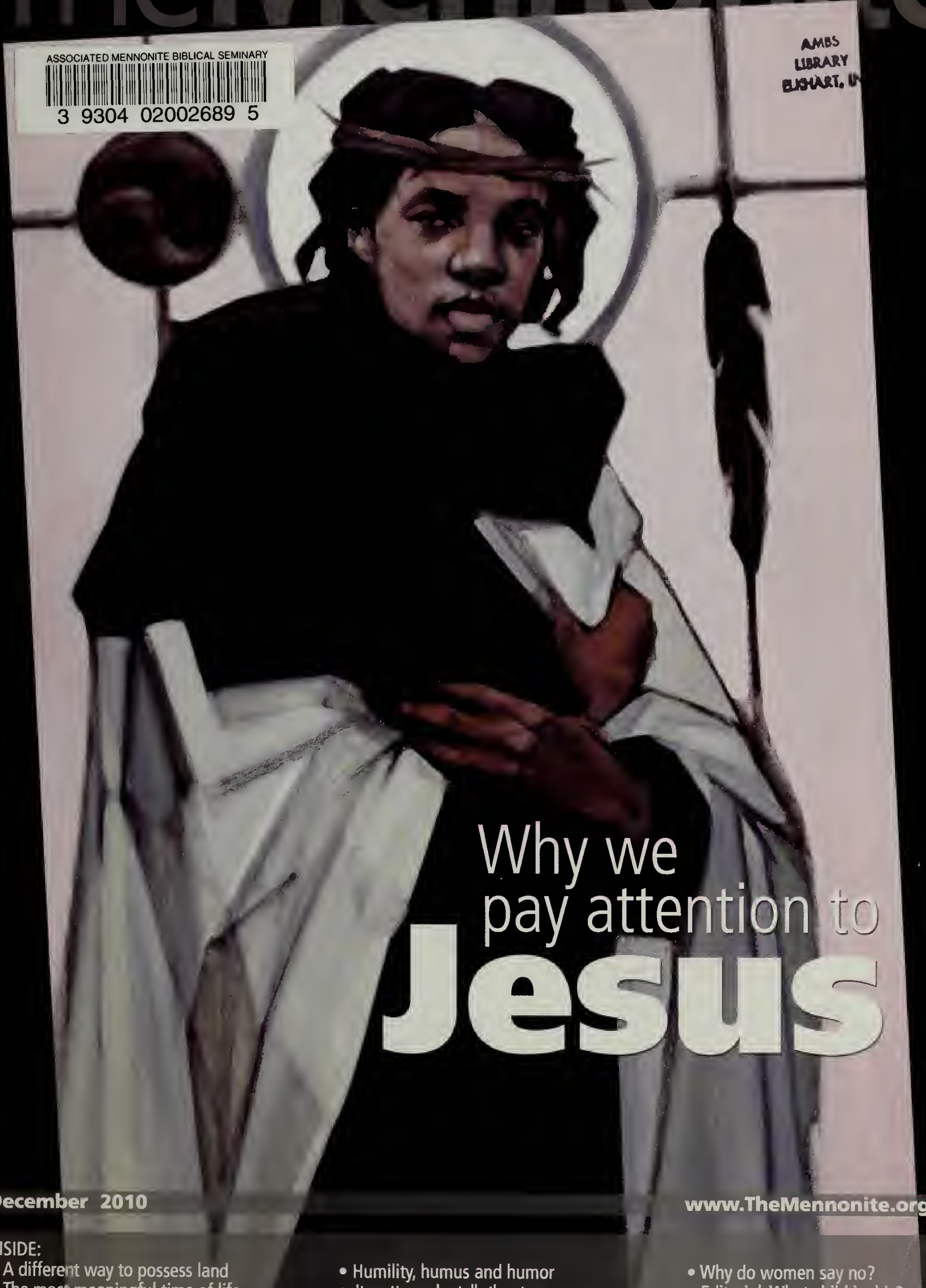

Why we pay attention to Jesus

December 2010

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ON THE COVER: "Jesus of the People" by Janet McKenzie ©1999
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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Doubts about merger

I am of two minds regarding the merger of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) and Third Way Media (see page 38). On the one hand, organizational streamlining makes sense. On the other hand, neither Third Way Media nor its parent, Mennonite Mission Network, have been in the publication business.

As one who remains to be convinced that electronic media is an intrinsic improvement over print journalism (except that it is faster), I worry over how mature judgment, spiritual discernment and deepening conversation can be maintained in the church community without vigorous periodicals, stimulating pamphlets and engaging books. Herald Press and Faith and Life Press have surely been less than perfect, but for nearly 100 years they provided significant Sunday school materials and a long list of books essential to Mennonite life and ministry. These presses, along with their bookstores, have been essential ingredients to the Mennonite witness.

I am grateful for the contribution of Cascadia, Pandora, CMU presses and Good Books to Mennonite thought and witness. But don't we also need a publisher who represents the ministry of the denomination? In this case it is important to recognize that Mennonite Publishing Network represents both Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. I would regret if the transnational character of the Mennonite voice would be further weakened.

My hope is that the vision that inspired Faith and Life Press, Mennonite Publishing House and Mennonite Publishing Network will be strengthened and extended. My prayer is that the publication enterprise will maintain its high standard of productivity.

I feel so deeply about the significance of a vigorous and imaginative publishing program that I propose that whenever the new structure is established that a campaign be launched immediately to raise a substantial fund to support the nurture of this part of the church's life and witness.*—John A. Lapp, executive secretary emeritus, Mennonite Central Committee*

Don't blame the victims

Eileen Ahearn's article "Helping Those in the Hell of PTSD" (November) makes a powerful statement that war harms everyone connected to it—whether "winners" or "losers"—and regardless of the end of the weapon a person was facing. Mennonites have been good about helping other victims of war, as exemplified by the work of PAX men to build homes in Germany after World War II and Mennonite Central Committee's work with Palestinian refugees.

The soldiers Ahearn is working with are also victims—victims of some patriotic rhetoric; victims of the military machine's faith in redemptive violence and the belief that violence solves problems; victims of social factors such as poverty and high unemployment and a desire to pay for a college education. Of course, by all means we need to educate our young people to stay away from the military. But any question about the advisability of Ahearn's help to returning soldiers because they were victims of the U.S. military machine, incidentally paid for by our tax money, is to blame the victims rather than the root causes.*—J. Denny Weaver, Madison, Wis.*

Death is part of life

As a registered nurse with more than 30 years experience in intensive-care nursing, I was interested in the article discussing wastefulness in our health-care system (October, page 10). The problem is complex, but one aspect that I see daily in my practice is our culture's media-driven fear of death. Death is often not seen as a normal part of our existence but as an "enemy" that can somehow be defeated if we just apply enough technology. Various studies have shown that we spend 20 to 25 percent of our health-care dollars in the final six months of a person's life, usually with no beneficial effect, often doing great harm.

Writers observing the earliest Christians were often amazed at the latters' willingness to care for those afflicted with the plague or other deadly diseases, ostensibly because the Christians did not fear death.—*Hank Rossiter, Dalton, Ohio*

Racists in reverse

In the August issue (Miscellany) is a *Christian Century* article "Imagine a Black Tea Party." That is totally misleading about the current Tea Party movement. Therefore I conclude it is intentional. What we do know about the New Black Panthers is that they were present at a Philadelphia polling place in November 2008 intimidating white voters. The Miscellany article suggests that Tea Party people currently arm themselves with AK-47s, handguns and ammunition at gatherings and also spitting on a congressman, in protest, livid at his voting record. What does the *Christian Century* have that supports the comments?

As a regular reader of *The Mennonite*, this is an excellent example as to why I do not place any great validity in what is printed. As editor of *The Mennonite*, it is obvious you exercise little responsible oversight on what is printed. You disrespect your readers when you print trash like this.

It is obvious you have never attended a Tea Party gathering and noticed blacks in attendance and in leadership. I suggest you attend one and not remain ignorant. These comments are further evidence that you and many of the Mennonite elite are racists in reverse.—*Dale Welty, Wakarusa, Ind.*

Arizona law and Phoenix convention

Our Seekers Sunday school class of the Bethel College Mennonite Church of North Newton, Kan., has been discussing and reflecting upon the plight of immigrants whose fears are increased by the Arizona law, which many label the "pursuit bill." We read and expressed appreciation for the Mennonite Church USA delegation to Phoenix statement (August): "We desire and are committed to the steps that lead to one church, living the vision of the Lamb of God gathering persons from all tribes, nations and ethnic groups into one inclusive church."

One member, quoting Millard Lind, pointed to the Decalogue's statement of God's steadfast love extended to aliens, even to Nineveh, Israel's traditional enemy. "You shall love the alien as yourself, for you were an alien in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34).

In view of the immigrant and alien situation in Arizona, we have pondered statements and letters from Latinos who fear this bill and who do not want to be in Arizona or attend a convention in Phoenix. We reflected upon a statement by Yvonne Diaz, executive director of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, who concludes, "It is not safe for Latinos to be in Arizona."

A member also emphasized studying the thoughts and conclusions from

Continued on page 62

IN THIS ISSUE

Although our December issues normally focus on Christmas and the birth of Christ, readers will be receiving this issue before and during the first week of Advent. So we elected to publish Ted Grimsrud's cover story, "Why We Pay Attention to Jesus" (page 12), to again place Christ at the center of this new church year.

Unfortunately, there is little "peace on earth" today in the land into which Jesus was born. Marlin Jeschke (page 16) says, "Modern Israel is selling itself short, first in terms of territory, since God gave Abraham and his descendents the whole world, and second in terms of the privilege of being a model of a new way of possessing land … a way that is an alternative to the worldly way of violent conflict."

In "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (page 19), Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi describes "Open Bethlehem," a campaign to save the town and celebrate Bethlehem's sacred heritage as the birthplace of Christ and an icon of tolerance and openness.

During this holiday season, when so many family events will be focused on food, we also focus on a classic Mennonite cookbook: *Living More With Less* (page 24). Valerie Weaver-Zercher describes her initiation trepidation and guilt as she edited the 30th anniversary edition of Doris Janzen Longacre's best seller.

The news section includes several original news stories written by our staff. They include the role of David Myers, a former Mennonite minister, now in the Department of Homeland Security (page 39), and Ted Houser, who gave away 100 things in 100 days (page 42).

Mennonite Mission Network executive director Stanley Green also provides a report from the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism, held in Capetown, South Africa, Oct. 17-25.—*Editor*

Mysteries of the flesh

Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

I walk up to the chain-linked fence that surrounds the county prison with a few members of our church. We show our authorized visitor cards and are admitted into the facility. As we follow the stream of visitors into the dining hall, a voice from a loudspeaker gives permission for the inmates to join us. I find a few familiar faces and spend the next hour with them, sharing stories and discussing Bible verses. As our time comes to an end, visitors and inmates hold hands and form a large circle. We sing to those who have a birthday that week, and sometimes we celebrate with an inmate who has received news that he will be released soon. With our hands still holding us together, we bow our heads and pray.

There are not many situations during the week when my hands join with someone else's hands for such a long time. I will, of course, shake hands with a number of people as I go about my workday. And my wife and I will hold hands occasionally during an evening walk—yet when we do, after a few minutes our hands get sticky and sweaty, so we let go. But with those men in prison, for those last minutes of our time together, we don't let go, despite the awkwardness of holding another person's hand. Although none of us would ever talk about it in prison, our hands are leading our bodies into the intimacy of companionship, of being present with one another—of solidarity, which is just another name for love.

God's mystery bodied-forth through human flesh is the story of Christmas, as Mary welcomed God into the world through her body.

Through the union of our palms and fingers, we open ourselves to the flow of the Holy Spirit, which mingles our flesh and re-forms us into the body of Christ. The mysteries of Christ are made available for us as we pray and feel God's presence pass through the fleshiness of our hands.

Usually the Christian "fails to look forward to the point when the whole mystery of God will be known in the clasp of your brother's hand," writes Sebastian Moore in *God Is a New Language*. Yet in prison, with clasped hands, we patiently feel our way into the mystery of God: hand in hand, flesh on flesh—this is the site of revelation.

The textures of our hands give texture to the Word made flesh. Together our bodies write the Word. To use Moore's words again, our praying hands "body-forth the eternal word" as we receive the love of God and neighbor at the same time, in the same movement.

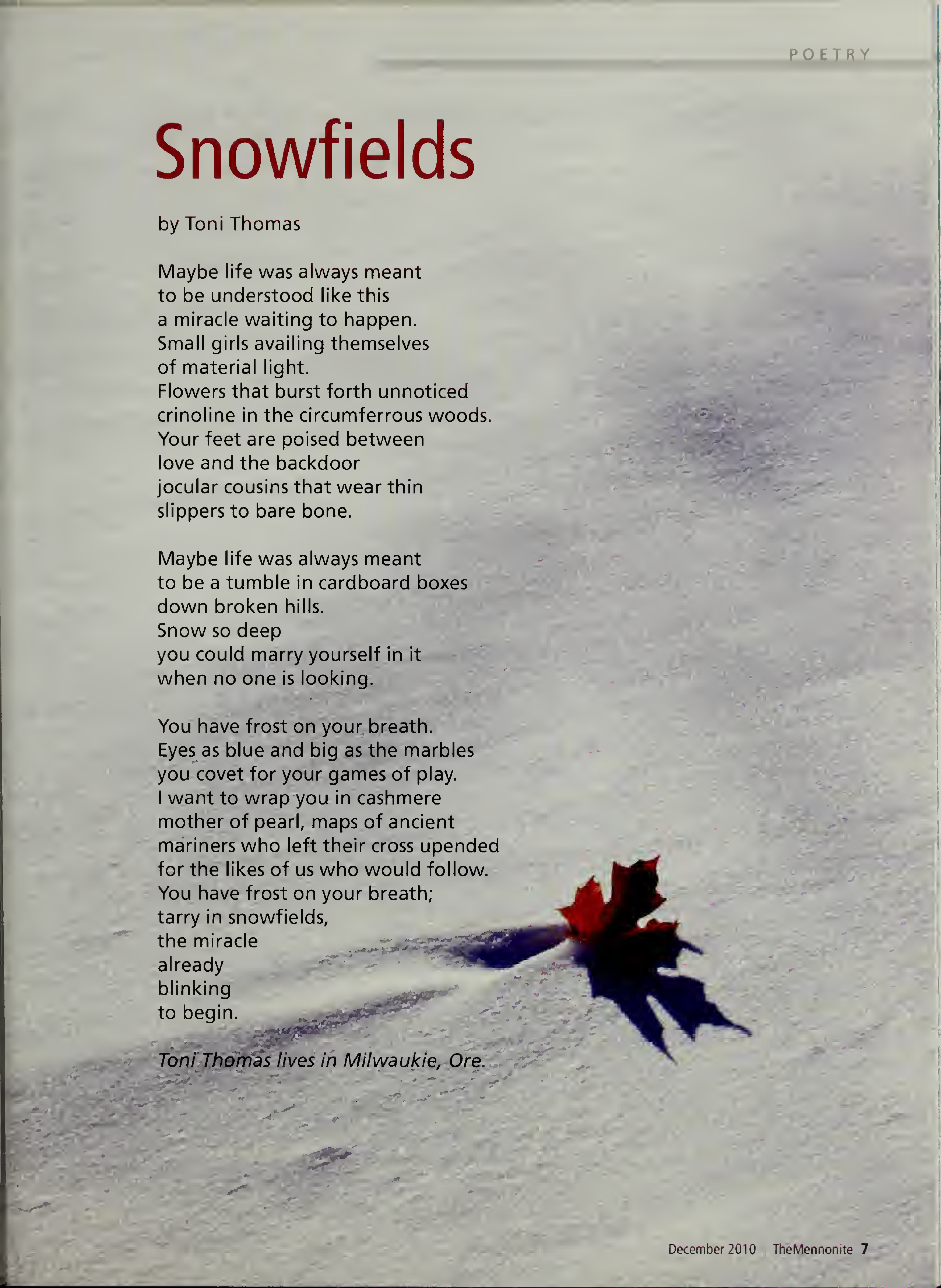
God's mystery bodied-forth through human flesh is the story of Christmas, as Mary welcomed God into the world through her body. The Gospel of Matthew makes it clear that Mary's womb was the site of God's intimate presence: "she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (1:18); and again, as the angel of the Lord said to Joseph, "take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (v. 20). The uncreated One becomes a creature as the Holy Spirit overshadows Mary's body. The One who is the life of the world receives life from Mary's flesh. God does not choose Mary out of necessity. God could have chosen another way to save the world. God's plan of salvation did not need to be so dependent on a woman.

Yet that's exactly what God does. Why?

"It can only be that God chooses this way because God likes it," writes Eugene Rogers in *After the Spirit*, "because God desires and loves and befriends human bodies."

The story of Christmas reveals God's profound love for human beings, God's intimate love for the very material that makes each of us a creature, our flesh and blood. God befriends bodies, even the most intimate and hidden parts of us, like Mary's womb.

As members of our church gather for fellowship and prayer in prison, we receive the flow of God's life through our hands. The love and friendship of God revealed at Christmas come to us again as the Spirit overshadows our circle of bodies in prison. As we pray, we find ourselves in Mary's womb, being re-formed by the Holy Spirit, and awaiting the birth of new life in our midst, the advent of Christ's body.



Snowfields

by Toni Thomas

Maybe life was always meant
to be understood like this
a miracle waiting to happen.
Small girls availing themselves
of material light.
Flowers that burst forth unnoticed
crinoline in the circumferrous woods.
Your feet are poised between
love and the backdoor
jocular cousins that wear thin
slippers to bare bone.

Maybe life was always meant
to be a tumble in cardboard boxes
down broken hills.
Snow so deep
you could marry yourself in it
when no one is looking.

You have frost on your breath.
Eyes as blue and big as the marbles
you covet for your games of play.
I want to wrap you in cashmere
mother of pearl, maps of ancient
mariners who left their cross upended
for the likes of us who would follow.
You have frost on your breath;
tarry in snowfields,
the miracle
already
blinking
to begin.

Toni Thomas lives in Milwaukie, Ore.

Bethel inaugurates White as its 14th president

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College inaugurated its 14th president, Perry D. White, during the college's Fall Festival Oct. 10 in North Newton. During an address, White said that "higher education—especially in nonprofit, private, liberal arts colleges—is being challenged from many sides today." He listed some of Bethel's challenges—to grow enrollment, to "keep reevaluating, regenerating and rejuvenating our curriculum," to improve students' residential experience and to enhance Bethel's regional and national reputation. Growing enrollment isn't just about Bethel remaining "a viable institution," White said. "We must grow enrollment because the world needs more Bethel graduates. Our graduates are the barometer by which we measure our success."—*Bethel College*

A letter from Scottdale

GOSHEN, Ind.—Leaders of the Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church are hoping Mennonites will not get a bad name as Mennonite Publishing Network closes its Scottdale facility and transfers staff to Harrisonburg, Va. (see page 38). The leaders expressed their concerns in a Nov. 3 letter to MPN and Mennonite Church USA leaders.

"When companies like U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel decided 20 or more years ago that continuing to operate in western Pennsylvania was no longer viable," they wrote, "they left behind rusting and deteriorating buildings that not only became eyesores but also saddled communities with difficult structures to deal with. We are concerned that the same thing not happen when MPN leaves our community, leaving local residents wondering if Mennonites operate in the same way."

The letter was signed by the six members of the church council, three elders and co-pastors Conrad and Donna Mast. The letter also requests that Executive Board and MPN leaders meet with Scottdale community leaders to "explore possibilities for the use of the MPN building as the basis for a continuing presence in Scottdale that would serve the community by addressing some need in the community."

In a Nov. 11 email, MPN executive director Ron Rempel said MPN as well as Executive Board leaders are ready to participate in such a process.

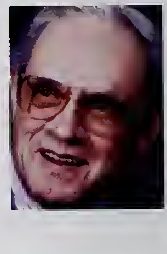
According to Rempel, Executive Board leaders also said, "We are delighted that Scottdale Mennonite Church is focused on ways to reach out to the community in which it is located."—*Everett J. Thomas*

P. Buckley Moss to benefit children's choir

Renowned artist P. Buckley Moss has created a new painting titled "Making a Joyful Noise," as a fund-raiser for the Shenandoah Valley Children's Choir, part of the music department of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg Va. Prints are $80, with half the profit going toward the choir's operating expenses.—*EMU*

David A. Shank, mission worker, dies at 86

ELKHART, Ind.—After a lifetime of serving the church on three different continents, David Arthur Shank, 86, died Oct. 20 at his home in Goshen, Ind. His passing came just weeks after Shank and his wife of 62 years, Wilma, were honored with the Goshen (Ind.) College Culture for Service Award, given in tribute for lives spent in respectful and culturally appropriate mission work through Mennonite Mission Network and a predecessor agency in Europe and West Africa.



Shank was born October 7, 1924, in Orrville, Ohio. He fulfilled his military duty through three years of alternative Civilian Public Service, working in soil conservation and mental health. In 1948, he graduated from Goshen College with a bachelor's degree in sociology and married Wilma E. Hollopeter, from Sharon Center, Ohio.—*MMN*

Zuerchers receive award from Everence

GOSHEN, Ind.—Everence presented its 2010 Journey Award to Joyce and Bill Zuercher, Hesston, Kan., in October. The couple is directing half the $5,000 award to South Central Mennonite Conference and the other half to the Hopi Mission School in Arizona.

The Zuerchers have worked in eastern Kentucky, he as a hospital administrator and she as a schoolteacher. Then they moved to Kansas, where Bill worked as a consultant for Mennonite medical facilities, and Joyce taught early childhood education and reading. When they retired, they went to Hopi Mission School, where he was the administrator, and she taught first grade. Bill encouraged others to invest their talents and their money in the school. Many volunteers came, including to build a gym—made possible through fund-raising by Bill and the school's foundation.—*Everence*

—compiled by Anna Groff

Tyler Klassen

Wenger Shenk inaugurated as AMBS president

Sara Wenger Shenk, new president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., delivers her inaugural address on Oct. 24 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. She began on Oct. 1 after a two-month preparation period.—*AMBS*

Two Palestinians killed, four families homeless

HEBRON—On Oct. 8, Christian Peacemaker Team members went to the Jabal Johar district of Hebron in response to news that the Israeli military had killed two Palestinians.

CPT workers saw heavy machinery at work just behind a mosque and learned from local people that the military had demolished a three-story building in reprisal for the killings of four Israeli settlers near Kiryat Arba four weeks ago.

The two dead men, thought to be members of the military wing of Hamas, were accused of killing the settlers.

A large crowd of young Palestinian men carried away the body of one of the dead men from the site of the demolished house.

When the young men returned they began throwing rocks at the Israeli Border Police in the street below the apartment and burning tires. The Border Police responded with percussion grenades and later with tear-gas.

After the Israeli soldiers completed the demolition of the house and left, the CPT workers went to the site and discovered it had been home to four families: about 30 people in all.—*CPT*

MC Canada promotes peace through bus ads

WINNIPEG, Man.—A grassroots response to Mennonite Church Canada's Peace in the Public Square initiative is rolling through the streets of Saskatoon. On Sept. 6, five posters adorning the sides of city busses made their debut, carrying messages promoting peace and nonviolence. Messages such as "the way things are is not the way things have to be," "reuse love, reduce violence, recycle kindness" and "imagine life without war" were originally scheduled to circulate from Sept. 6 to Oct. 31, but an error on one of the signs prompted the transit company to make corrections and extend the ser - vice until Nov. 30. Seven Mennonite churches in Saskatoon combined resources to support the campaign. *—Mennonite Church Canada*

First minister of women for Southeast Conference

SARASOTA, Fla.—Doris Diener was installed as the first Southeast Mennonite Conference (SMC) minister of Mennonite women on Oct. 16.

Marco Guete, SMC conference minister, led the installation during the annual Fall Inspiration Day at Ashton Community Fellowship, Sarasota.

Diener has been the president of the SMC women's organization for the last four years and carries a passion for the diverse women of the conference. Women from three local churches planned the day. Each woman represented a different ethnic group—African-American, Hispanic-American and European-Americans.—*SMC*

Belarus immigrant dies

SUGARCREEK, Ohio—Mykola Ahijevych Sr., 99, of Sugarcreek died Sept. 29 at Walnut Hills Nursing Home. He was born on Feb. 11, 1911, in Belarus and was married to the late Maria Marunchenko in 1934, also in Belarus.

When the Germans invaded Russia during World War II, Mykola and his family were taken from their home and transported by railroad car to a concentration labor camp near Hanover, Germany, where they spent seven years. Following the war, on Jan. 13, 1951, they emigrated to the United States and settled in Sugarcreek. This was made possible by First Mennonite Church in Sugarcreek and the leadership of the late Bill Stauffer. Mykola became a member of First Mennonite. Mykola was first employed by Stauffer on his farm and then by Geiser, Werner & Kappler Cabinet Shop until his retirement at age 65. He was a master carpenter and known especially for the grandfather clocks he created.—*First Mennonite Church of Sugarcreek*

How to get beyond Islamophobia

In October, Juan Williams gave the nation a Rorschach test, writes Robert Wright in the *New York Times*. Williams said he gets scared when people in "Muslim garb" board a plane he's on, and he promptly got (a) fired by NPR and (b) rewarded by Fox News with a big contract.

Wright then asks this: "Suppose [Williams] had said gay men give him the creeps because he fears they'll make sexual advances. NPR might well have fired him, but would Fox News have chosen that moment to give him a $2-million pat on the back?"

Wright describes a movement in American society from homophobia to Islamophobia. That suffix "phobia" means "fear" and usually describes an unreasonable fear. Wright points out, for example, that "over the past nine years about 90 million flights have taken off from American airports, and not one has been brought down by a Muslim terrorist. Even in 2001, no flights were brought down by people in 'Muslim garb.'"

Wright calls this irrational fear dangerous. "As Islamophobia grows," he writes, "it alienates Muslims, raising the risk of homegrown terrorism—and homegrown terrorism heightens the Islamophobia, which alienates more Muslims, and so on."

How do we address this? Wright points to a book, *American Grace*, by the social scientists Robert Putnam and David Campbell, which studies changes over the decades among churchgoers in attitudes toward gays and others. They explain this partly by what they call a "bridging" model. The idea, says Wright, "is that tolerance is largely a question of getting to know people. If, say, your work brings you in touch with gay people or Muslims—and especially if your relationship with them is collaborative—this can brighten your attitude toward the whole tribe they're part of. And if this broader tolerance requires ignoring or reinterpreting certain Scriptures, so be it; the meaning of Scripture is shaped by social relations."

We may want to argue this, but these are social scientists measuring changes in people's attitudes. We might also look at Mennonites' own changes in attitude toward, say, divorce, over the years.

The bridging model works like this, says Wright: "A few decades ago, people all over America knew and liked gay people—they just didn't realize these people were gay. So by the time gays started coming out of the closet, the bridge had already been built."

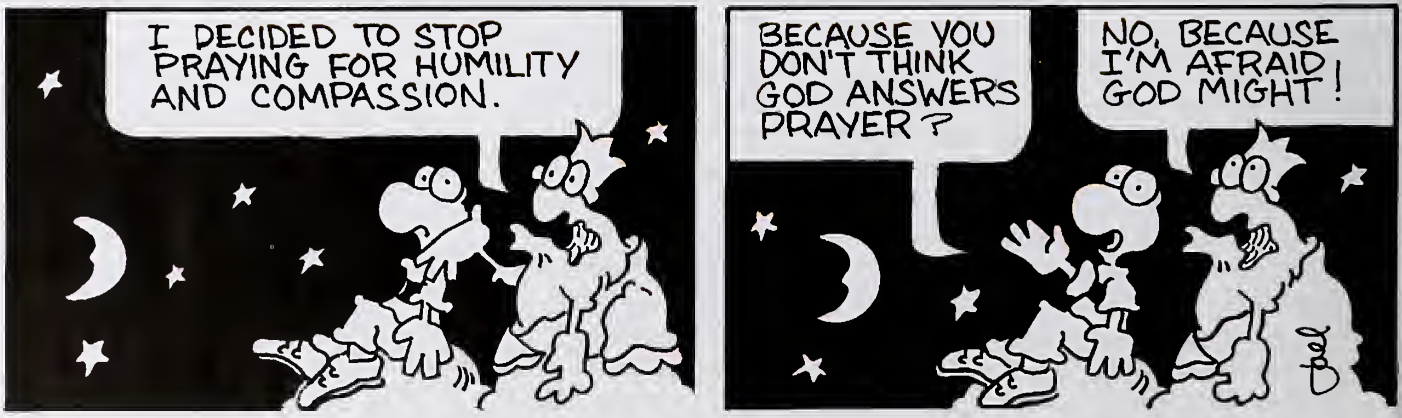
However, this is more difficult in relation to Muslims, says Wright. For Putnam and Campbell there weren't enough encounters between Christians and Muslims to yield statistically significant data because the population of Muslims is so small and is concentrated in distinct regions. "Being a small and geographically concentrated group makes it hard for many people to know you, so not much bridging naturally happens," writes Wright. "That would explain why Buddhists and Mormons, along with Muslims, get low feeling-thermometer ratings in America."

The need to build bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims is great, says Wright. "It's a matter of bringing people into contact with the 'other' in a benign context. And it's a matter of doing it fast, before the vicious circle takes hold, spawning appreciable homegrown terrorism and making fear of Muslims less irrational."

My own experience reinforces the point Wright is making. I know Muslims in my own community, and I've experienced the warm hospitality of Muslims in both Palestine and Jordan. Such encounters have left me not feeling fear when I see a person in "Muslim garb" (a misnomer). They have also left me pained and saddened by the Islamophobia I see around me.
—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


I DECIDED TO STOP PRAYING FOR HUMILITY AND COMPASSION.
BECAUSE YOU DON'T THINK GOD ANSWERS PRAYER?
NO, BECAUSE I'M AFRAID GOD MIGHT!
Joel

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “Why are we so sure that some planning or progressive taxation or the collective ownership of public goods are intolerable restrictions on liberty, whereas closed-circuit TV cameras, state bailouts for investment banks ‘too big to fail,’ tapped telephones and expensive foreign wars are acceptable burdens for a free people to bear?” —*the late Tony Judt, historian, from* Ill Fares the Land

Screen time may harm mental health

In a study of 1,000 children ages 10 and 11, researchers tracked kids' activity levels and used questionnaires to gauge their screen-viewing time as well as their mental health and social behavior. Those who spent more than two hours in front of a screen were more likely to have emotional difficulties, hyperactivity or problems relating to other people, compared with kids who had less screen time.

The results, say the researchers, reinforce the importance of limiting screen time for children. The scientists note that the drop in physical activity among youngsters may also be linked to a more general decrease in living space—which for kids means less space to play—that tends to produce low-activity pursuits such as watching TV or using a computer.—*Time*

40%

Portion of daily calories consumed by U.S. kids ages 2 to 18 that are devoid of nutrients and high in fat and sugar.—*Time*

Iranian health care

Authorities in Mississippi have been studying the Iranian health-care system, which has eliminated disparities between urban and rural areas and reduced infant mortality rates in rural communities tenfold over the past 30 years. Key to its system are health houses in remote villages that are staffed by “behvarzes,” villagers who are trained to give basic health-care services, including preventive care. Planners in Mississippi are hoping to train mothers on welfare to staff health houses. “If the Iranians came up with a cure for cancer, would we not use it just because we dislike their leaders?” asks a health-care consultant in Mississippi.—*The Christian Century*

14.3%

Percentage of Americans living in poverty (44 million), a 15-year high.—*U.S. Census*

Immigration misconceptions

Blogger Andrew Simpson, a policy and outreach associate at Sojourners, tackles the misconception that immigrants take American jobs and drive down wages of American workers. He offers documentation that:

- Immigrants are not taking American jobs but rather increasing employment for native-born American workers.
- Immigrants increase the average wages of most American workers.
- Immigrants create jobs when they start new businesses—*www.sojo.net*

Lutheran church to cut staff

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Oct.11 authorized the officers of ELCA's churchwide organization to implement a new design of the churchwide organization beginning Feb. 1, 2011, the start of the next fiscal year. Implementation will mean the 358-member churchwide staff—including 270 at the churchwide office in Chicago—will decrease by approximately 65 employees or 60 full-time equivalents, said Mark S. Hanson, ELCA presiding bishop.—*ELCA*

17.25 million

is the cost of each murder in the United States, according to researchers at Iowa State University. They also calculated that each rape costs $448,532, each robbery $335,733, each aggravated assault $145,379 and each burglary $41,288. —*New York Times*

Rumors run rampant

Fox News watchers are more likely than other Americans to believe dubious claims about the proposed Islamic community center near Ground Zero, according to a new study. “The results are very clear: the more people use Fox News, the more rumors they have heard and believe,” said researchers at Ohio State University's School of Communications in a nine-page report released Oct. 14.—*Religion News Service*

Why we pay attention to Jesus

by Ted Grimsrud

"Jesus of the People" by Janet McKenzie ©1999 www.janetmckenzie.com

Jesus is pretty amazing.
He's an ancient character
in an obscure corner
of the Roman Empire.
He barely made it
to his 30s
and then joined
countless other
expendable people
the Empire considered
worth executing.

Jesus embodies a lot of what we want to embody ourselves.

Yet, in his afterlife, he became surely the most famous human being in world history. Certainly, the story of Jesus has been twisted and turned, exploited for evil purposes, at times corrupted almost beyond recognition—but somehow sprouts keep shooting up through the rubble, bringing forth flowers, revealing something of the beauty of the original vision of this person who history can't let go of.

We still must ask, though, why do we pay attention to Jesus?

Once upon a time, there was a brilliant young German scholar and musician who paid attention to Jesus. The seriousness with which he paid attention to Jesus led Albert Schweitzer to abandon a career that combined being a professor of religion with being a world-renowned organist. He returned to school, earned a medical doctorate and spent the rest of his long life as a medical missionary in Africa and gained enough renown to be named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his humanitarian work.

Schweitzer's most important scholarly work was about Jesus. In his book *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, he surveyed attempts by European scholars in the 19th century to produce a purely objective, historically accurate portrayal of Jesus and get behind the obvious biases of the Gospel writers to the supposed bedrock of fact.

Schweitzer scorned these efforts. He concluded his book with the famous image of various scholars peering deep into the wells of history looking for the face of the historical Jesus. They don't realize that the face they see looking up at them is actually their own. They are not really looking at Jesus but only at a reflecting pool of water.

This image makes an undeniable and important point. We all look at Jesus through our own perspective. We all look for stuff that matters to us and that speaks to our world. None of us can be objective about Jesus. We all run the risk of turning Jesus simply into a caricature of our own values and our own culture.

One impact of Schweitzer's cutting insight, though, has been to serve as a kind of cynical debunking tool. It's a way to mock attempts to take Jesus seriously: Ah, you're just projecting your own interests onto Jesus and calling them his.

When we look at what people say about Jesus, we see such diversity and contradictions and self-justifications. I have two recent books that focus on how Americans have presented Jesus—one's called *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004) by Stephen Prothero, the other *Jesus in America: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession* (HarperOne, 2005) by Richard Wightman Fox. These books make it clear how so many in our culture have confused a reflection of themselves for a picture of Jesus.

And yet …

We all run the risk of turning Jesus simply into a caricature of our own values and culture.

There just may be something we could call revelatory in this cacophony of images of Jesus humans have generated these past 2,000 years. Maybe we see something truthful in the sum of what humans, Christian and non-Christian, rich and poor, religious and secular, young and old, westerner and easterner, say about Jesus.

Jesus has become a metaphor for human aspirations. He symbolizes what people want. Some people want sick things. So we get images of Jesus wielding an assault rifle or a picture called "Undefeated" with Jesus the boxer, muscle-bound, leaning back against the ropes in the corner of the ring, his gloves hanging next to him, a satisfied, victorious, post-fight smirk on his face, and a banner labeled "Savior" hanging next to him.

But even skeptics recognize that this super-macho Jesus isn't right. Comedian Bill Maher, in his movie *Religulous* (the title comes from merging the words religious and ridiculous) goes on a 90-minute rant against religion, especially conservative Christianity. But several times he invokes Jesus as evidence on his side in his critique. You Christians are contradicting what Jesus was about, he says.

Several years ago, the *National Catholic Reporter* held a contest for artists to create representations of Jesus. The winner, a powerful painting called "Jesus of the People," used a young African-American woman as its model. I bet if you ▶

showed a cross-section of people this picture and asked who it was, most would say, Jesus. Most people see him as "Jesus of the people" (all the people, not just white, wealthy, powerful male people).

If we pay attention to what people say and think about Jesus, we actually get an overall picture of something interesting—and not necessarily that far from the gospel portrayal.

This is why we should note this quote from historian Jaroslav Pelikan: "As respect for the organized church has declined, reverence for Jesus has grown. There is more in him than is dreamt of in the philosophy and Christology of the theologians. Now he belongs to the world." Jesus has escaped the bounds of formal doctrine and top-down church domination.

The vulnerability of God becomes our most powerful basis for belief.

With this loosening of control over how Jesus is presented to the world, we do see an inability to prevent misuse and abuse of the message and image of Jesus. Yet we also see a ministering to wounded hearts, an empowerment for resistance to the domination system, a reminder to so many of how the core convictions Jesus stands for contrast so sharply with the "American way."

We see in the story of Jesus in our world a powerful reflection of God's vulnerability. Go back to the story of Noah and the Flood. Instead of an all-powerful, all-knowing, emotionally untouchable, above-it-all patriarch in the sky, we get in the Flood story a God brought low by grief, a God whose heart can be broken by creation. The story does tell us that out of this distress God creates an overwhelmingly destructive flood. But the story goes on to make clear that this retribution is dissatisfactory to God. What comes out of the Flood is a new approach, one we could say embraces vulnerability. God starts a long, fragile process of dealing with brokenness and alienation through persevering love.

The story of biblical Israel reemphasizes God's vulnerability in the tangled path of faithfulness, alienation, obedience, injustice, destruction, renewal, tears and fears. Then in the New Testament Gospels we again see vulnerability. God's very son enters human life. He embodies persevering love and gets executed as a revolutionary for his trouble.

The vulnerability of God becomes our most powerful basis for belief. God's vulnerability stands in contrast to all the energies Christians have and exert trying to construct airtight arguments, to create and enforce overpowering doctrines, to restrict access to God and salvation with closed membership and closed rituals and to silence doubt and questions and expressions of dissent. The true power of God to transform human hearts is the kind of power that, in Isaiah's words, "does not break a bruised reed" (42:3).

God allows many versions of the story to be told, even contradictions and counter-stories. And in this cacophony of versions and representations, as well as in the cacophony of the turmoils and traumas of life in this fallen world that seems so far from God's intentions, we nonetheless see Jesus.

We can see in the amazing variety of responses to and representations of Jesus an affirmation by God of human aspirations. When you get down to it and acknowledge all the terrible exceptions, many human beings want to be like the "Jesus of the people."

Another great and in the best sense iconic representation of Christ is the woodcut "The Christ of the Breadlines" by artist Fritz Eichenberg. The picture, which was created for and has become identified with the Catholic Worker movement, shows a Depression-era lineup of hurting people waiting in line for some food. Standing in the midst of the line is a humble-looking character clearly recognizable as Jesus.

Even skeptics such as Bill Maher, it seems, believe that images such as the Christ of the Breadlines give us an accurate sense of the true Jesus—and challenge us to be more like that ourselves. This is what Pelikan had in mind when he wrote that Jesus now belongs to the world. Jesus has been freed from church dogma and, remarkably, the result has been growth in awareness of what his message actually was, and this message centers on our highest human ideals.

We pay attention to Jesus because he embodies a lot of what we want to embody ourselves—to be truthful, kind and courageous, to say no to domination and oppression, to be in solidarity with people in need living simply with generosity sharing our resources.

However, and this is a big however, while many of the various representations of Jesus in our world point us toward a healing Jesus, a biblical Jesus—we still would do well to solidify our understanding. The general sense of Jesus echoes the Gospel accounts. This then should encourage us to look more closely at, to take more seriously,

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those accounts. They provide all we can know about the Jesus who walked among us.

We should read the Gospels now in a post-Christendom, or a Jesus-who-belongs-to-the-world, sense. What do we learn from this flesh-and-blood, pre-dogma Jewish prophet who speaks to our flesh-and-blood lives?

Luke 7:18-23 can serve as an entrée into the story. Let's assume that when John the Baptist's disciples go to Jesus and ask, "Are you the one who is to come?" they had in mind, Are you the promised Messiah, the Christ, the one God will send to bring wholeness to the world.

But what is meant by "Messiah" (Hebrew) or "Christ" (Greek)? Maybe the story becomes more clear if we say that by "Christ" we mean one who truly shows us the possibilities of living as fully humans, healthy and whole. A model, a guide, an empowerer. So Christ is a character in solidarity with humanity, not one who stands over and against humanity.

John's disciples ask our question: Is Jesus this kind of character, a Christ, a model and empowerer for helping us be whole and faithfully human?

How does Jesus answer? Typically he doesn't simply say yes or no. Partly he recognizes that so much depends on what kind of Christ we are looking for. What he does is name what it is he stands for and does: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the leapers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them" (Luke 7:22).

The meaning of these words, their reception in Jesus' world, the ways God vindicates them, make up the story of the gospel. Let's notice a couple of things.

We face a test here. What kind of people do we want to be? How we answer will determine how we understand the validity of Jesus' answer. Do we passionately desire healing in our own lives and at least as much in the lives of others? Do we believe such healing, regardless of the resistance from those who benefit from the brokenness and alienation, is truly good news? If so, we will recognize that Jesus is the Christ. We will pay attention to him because we believe he can and will help us find healing for ourselves and find power to be healers of others.

Do we passionately desire healing in our own lives and at least as much in the lives of others?

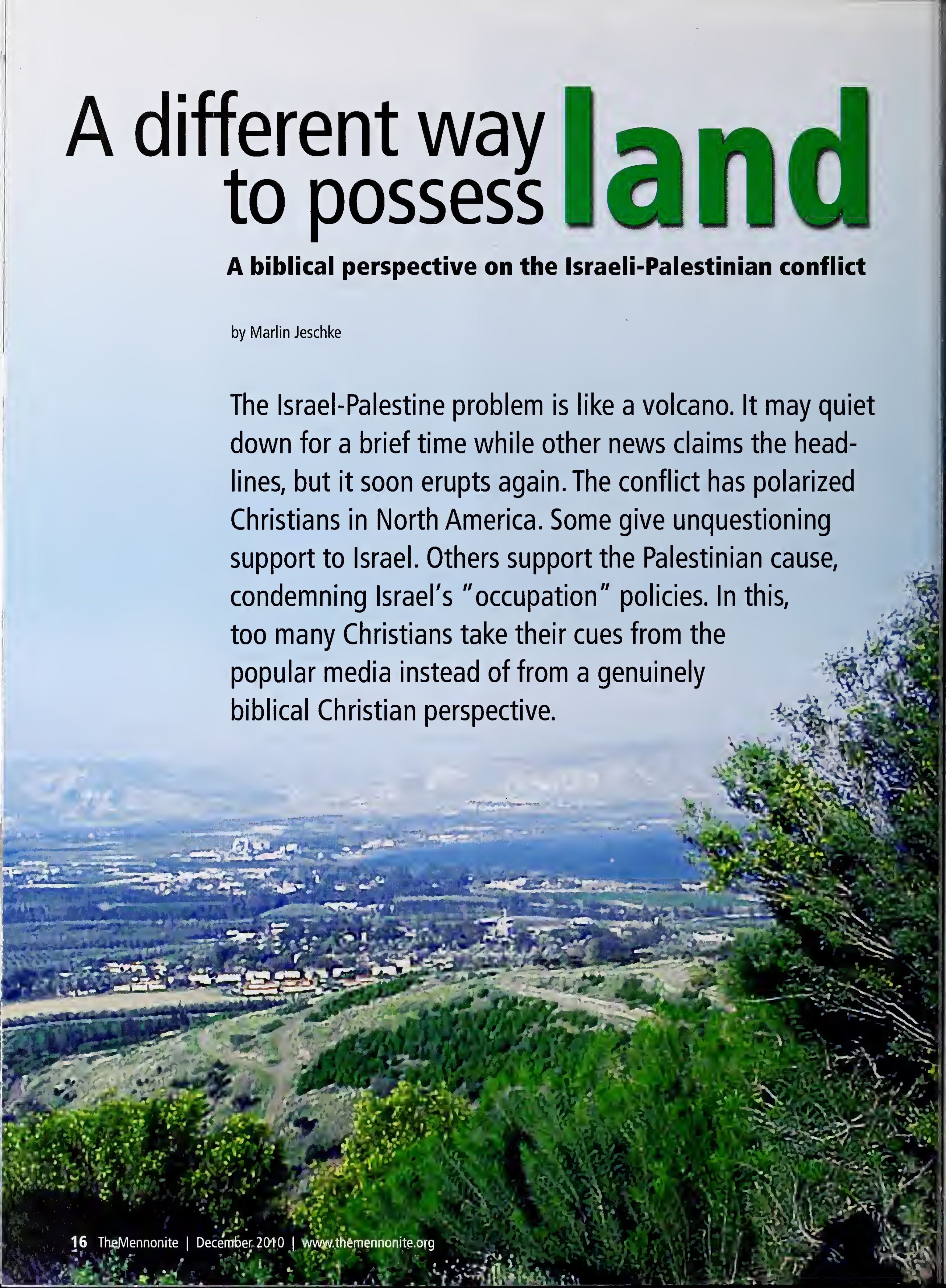
Ted Grimsrud teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

A different way to possess land

A biblical perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

by Marlin Jeschke

The Israel-Palestine problem is like a volcano. It may quiet down for a brief time while other news claims the headlines, but it soon erupts again. The conflict has polarized Christians in North America. Some give unquestioning support to Israel. Others support the Palestinian cause, condemning Israel's "occupation" policies. In this, too many Christians take their cues from the popular media instead of from a genuinely biblical Christian perspective.



That perspective begins with what Christianity has said for 2,000 years, from the New Testament on. Christianity by its very existence claims that the promises and hopes of Israel in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the coming of Messiah Jesus and the establishment at Pentecost of the church, a global community of faith. That's what the books of the New Testament claim, especially Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letter to the Romans.

Let me sketch this claim briefly. From the time of Abraham on—in what we call the salvation story—God is trying to create a new human community, a social order that is an alternative to the fallen, sinful social order that has spoiled God's original intention in creation. The salvation story starts modestly with the family of Abraham but eventually embraces the whole human race. God says already at the outset that through Abraham all people of the world will be blessed.

According to the salvation story, two developments threaten to frustrate God's salvation purposes. One is the temptation of Abraham's descendents to revert to the ways of fallen humanity, as in their determination, according to 1 Samuel 7, to have a king and become "like the nations" instead of being an alternative to worldly nations.

God overrules this decision by sending Israel into exile. Out of the exile comes Israel's new form of life as a synagogue people. The synagogue, as John Howard Yoder has said, "is the most fundamental sociological innovation in the history of religions." It is the blueprint of the Christian church. In its synagogue form of life, scattered Israel does in fact become a "light to the nations." Many Gentiles convert to Israel's faith, as we see from the book of Acts, becoming "God-fearers," what we today might call "associate members" of synagogues (see Acts 13).

The second development that threatens to frustrate God's salvation purposes is Israel's inclination to see salvation as its exclusive possession, which they did not need to share with Gentiles unless Gentiles became Jews and observed all the laws of Pharisaic Judaism.

Jesus addresses this issue already in his Nazareth sermon reported in Luke 4 and in the Great Commission in Matthew 28. And Paul argues at length in his letter to the Roman church that Israel's own Scriptures anticipate the extension of salvation to the Gentiles. In that letter Paul contends that God doesn't show any favoritism, that both Jews and Gentiles will be judged according to their response to God's grace.

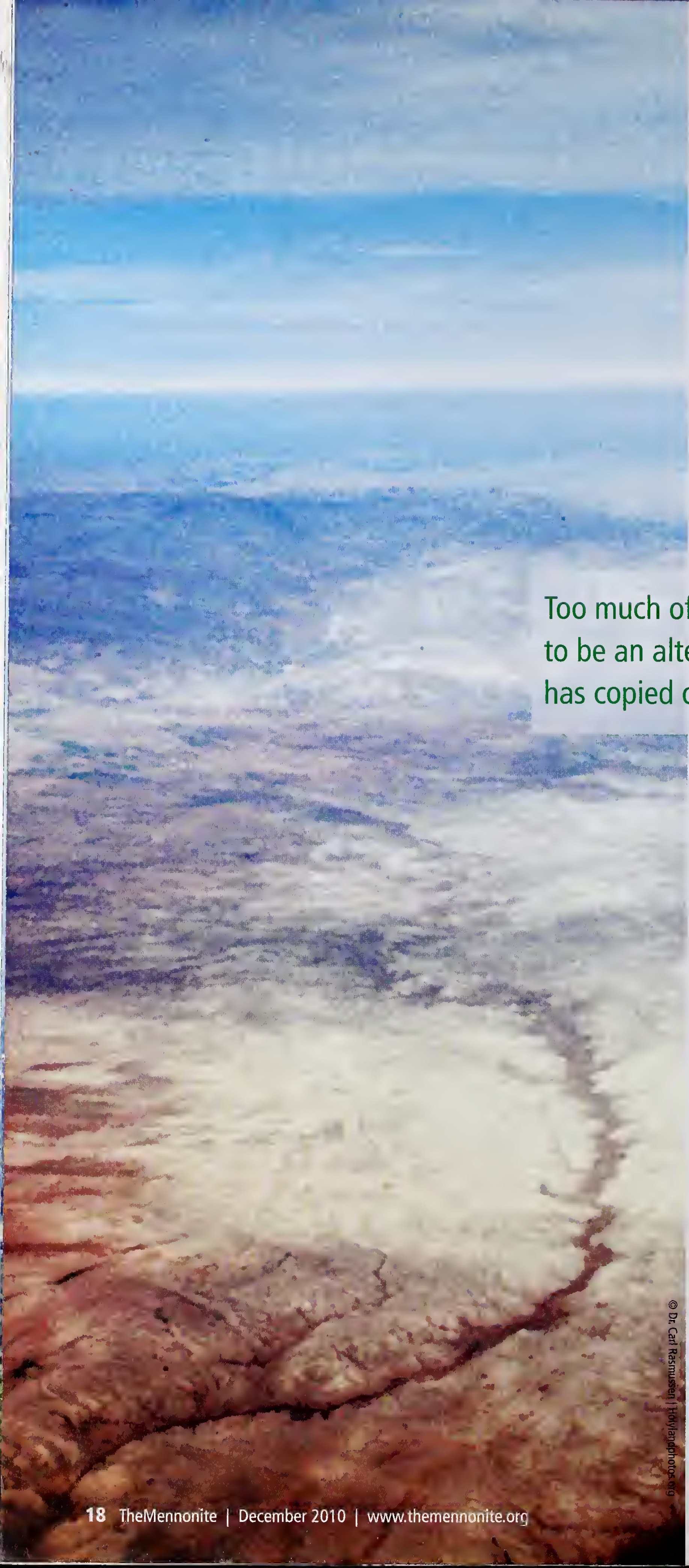
What Christianity has said for 2,000 years—that God's purpose from the time of Abraham on has been a global community of faith—is therefore not some novel claim. It is encapsulated already in Isaiah 2 and Micah 4, that in the fullness of time nations will come up to the mountain of the house of the Lord to learn God's law and as a consequence beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, not learning war anymore.

What does all this have to do with the current Israel-Palestinian conflict? Everything, because the first point in God's call of Abraham is the gift of land, a break with the way of violent conquest of land that has characterized most worldly societies through most of history (including, alas, the colonialist conquest of this continent). In keeping with this new model of possessing land, the promise to Abraham mentions no boundaries such as Dan to Beer-Sheba or the Mediterranean to the Jordan. "All the land that you see I will give to you," God tells Abraham (Genesis 13:14, 15). And by the time of the New Testament, quite a few Jews read this to mean that God had given Abraham the world ("kosmos"), as Paul writes in Romans 4:13.

In the biblical story from Abraham to Pentecost, God is trying to create a new humanity, a global family of faith among whom violent conflict over territory is left behind.

It all fits together and makes a coherent picture. In the biblical story from Abraham to Pentecost, God is trying to create a new humanity, a global family of faith among whom violent conflict over territory is left behind because they recognize themselves as God's new global family of faith, thus embracing the vision of Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 not to "learn war any more."

In the light of this biblical picture, modern Israel is selling itself short, first in terms of territory, since God gave Abraham and his descendents the whole world, and second in terms of the privilege of being a model of a new way of possessing land, possessing it the way Abraham did, a way that is an alternative to the worldly way of violent conflict. However, instead of taking it the way that God started in Abraham, Israel is once more resorting to the worldly way of violence to possess land. ▶



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What Israel's choice will lead to we must leave to God. As Paul says in Romans, God is not through with ethnic Israel, "Israel after the flesh." We can remain confident that God will remain a God of righteousness and of grace, whatever eventually happens to the modern state of Israel.

Given the biblical picture I have outlined, why are there so many Christians offering such uncritical support of the modern state of Israel? For the same reason that millions of Christians over the centuries offered uncritical support for the Holy Roman Empire, or as state churches offered uncritical support for England, Germany and Russia in their violent conquests or wars over land. And yes, as American Christians in the past or even today have offered uncritical support of the United States of America in its resort to violence over land.

Too much of the church today has lost its vision to be an alternative to fallen society and instead has copied or joined fallen society.

Like ancient Israel at the time of Samuel, too much of the church today has lost its vision to be an alternative to fallen society and instead has copied or joined fallen society. It seems to be only a "remnant" that retains the vision of Isaiah 2 and Micah 4—that going up to the Jerusalem of Jesus the Messiah to learn his law teaches us to identify with the global community of faith and abandon war in sharing space with each other on this planet.

In conclusion, let me restate it. For 2,000 years Christianity has claimed that in the biblical story of salvation from Abraham to Pentecost, God has been seeking to create a human community that is an alternative to fallen humanity, and this global community of faith is called to live by a new ethic in the possession of land, a way other than violence, conflict and bloodshed and all the evils of terror, refugees and death these bring in their wake.

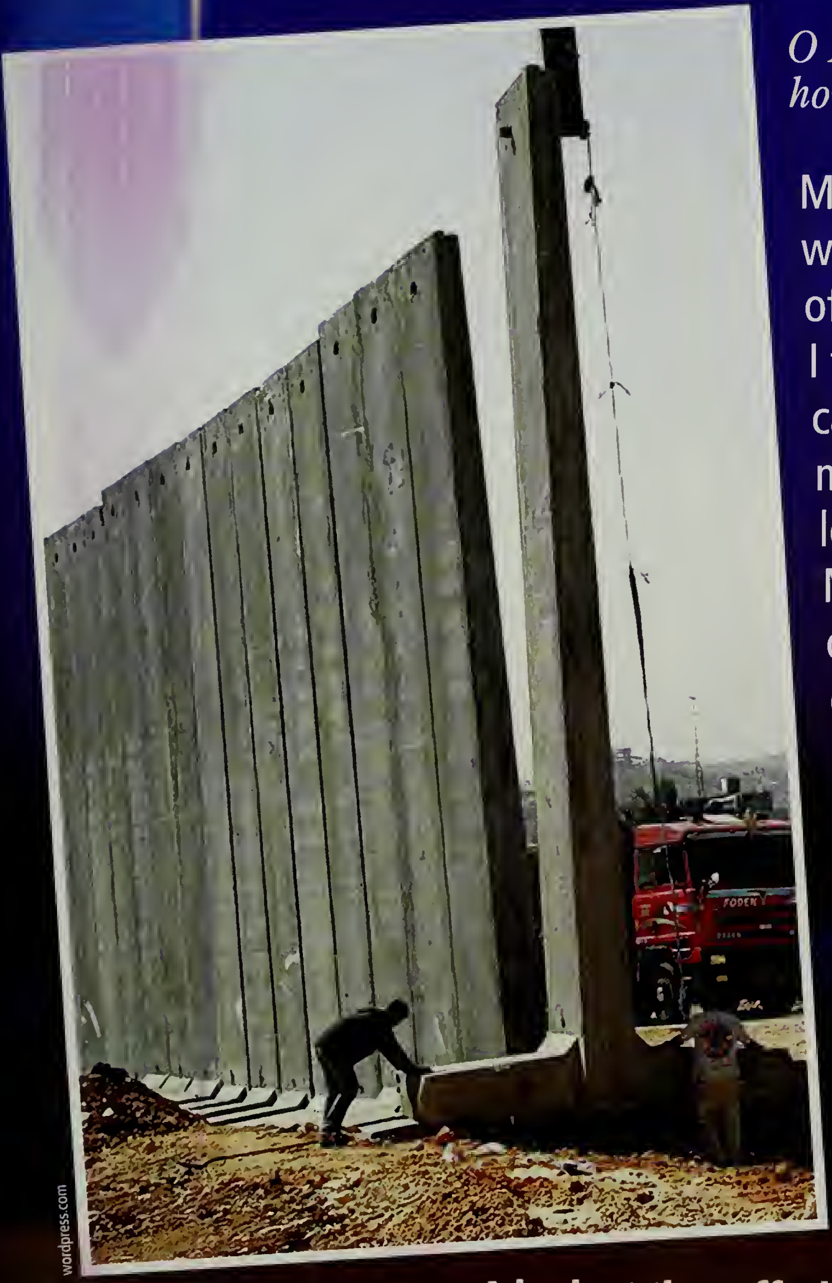
If you are a Christian, it is not just your duty, it is your privilege to embrace and live this vision of Isaiah 2 and Micah 4, the way Jesus also taught.

Marlin Jeschke is a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and author of Rethinking Holy Land *(Herald Press, 2005).*

O LITTLE TOWN OF

Bethlehem

by Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi



wordpress.com

O Little Town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie.

My heart breaks as I sing these words and relive my experience of contemporary Bethlehem. I finger the beautiful hand-carved olive-wood rosary given me by Sima. I gaze at the lovely colorful photo of the Madonna presented on his own accord to me by 5-year-old Nicholas. Again, I am surrounded by the warm hospitality of this Bethlehem Christian family. ▶

A look at the suffering from a dividing wall in Israel

I am transported back to the Bethlehem Inn where my Compassionate Listening delegation is residing. The group of Christians, Jews and Buddhists is led by Leah, a Jewish woman. We are committed to listening to the life stories and efforts of all sides in the ongoing hostilities of the region.

This wall separates us from our families and friends in East Jerusalem as well as our Jewish friends in Israel. ... I have not seen my sister in years.

I have met Sima through a mutual friend via the Internet. She and her husband, Mounir, come to meet me one evening after a full schedule of Compassionate Listening activity. We sit in the lobby and chat. They graciously offer to drive me on a tour of the imposing concrete wall. They show me the arbitrary meanderings of the tall zigzagging obstruction—one house surrounded on three sides, streets divided in half, separated neighborhoods, farmers isolated from their fields. "We feel like we are in a big prison."

They ask, "Would you like to come to our house for coffee?"

"That sounds lovely," I say.

As we approach the front door, the smell of the aromatic coffee wafts from within. They serve tasty homemade delicacies with the strong dark liquid. I am introduced to Nicolas, who is not yet sleeping, as he attends afternoon school sessions. The two girls, Berta, 14, and Nadia, 13, have retired to prepare for early rising and school the next day.

Mounir's family owned a thriving textile business before the wall was built. The business has been decimated due to the construction of the wall and the difficulties of passing through the checkpoints. They are no longer able to transport materials from their suppliers in Israel. Without materials, they have no product to stock vendor outlets. Sima, a high school teacher, is barely able to earn enough to maintain the family. She works full-time, cares for the family and each week assists the Dominican sisters with their computers. Marmood is job-hunting, participating in church-related activities, transporting the children to school and caring for his elderly parents.

Little Town of Bethlehem (NR), filmed on location in the West Bank, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, brings awareness to a growing nonviolent movement in the Middle East that rarely makes international headlines. It interviews a Palestinian Christian, an Israeli Jew and a Palestinian Muslim, all of whom dedicate their lives to seeking reconciliation nonviolently. While the film's style is geared to younger audiences, it is a film many should see.—*Gordon Houser*

"I feel so sad," she says. "My children have never seen the sea. Although it is not that far away, we simply are not permitted to go."

She goes on: "This wall separates us from our families and friends in East Jerusalem as well as our Jewish friends in Israel. They are not allowed to come here, and we have great difficulty going there. I have not seen my sister in years. She lives in Nazareth, only a couple hours' drive away."

"The Israeli government says that this wall is protecting their citizens. We wonder about walls. Do they truly protect?" she says.

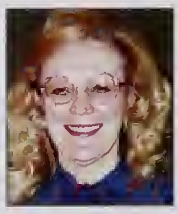
"Bethlehem is unique at Christmas," she says. "We celebrate Christmas in the church. The only thing I can give my children is to teach them to love and forgive." I see the somber look on the faces of Sima and her family. They have the expression of shock, grief and hurt. Yet they voice hope. "Your presence assures us that we are not forgotten. We believe God hears us with our prayers for peace."

"Oh, little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, oh hear your people cry. ..."

Open Bethlehem is a campaign to save the town and seeks to preserve and celebrate Bethlehem's sacred heritage as the birthplace of Christ and as an icon of tolerance and openness.

To find out about the children's book *Bethlehem Star*, Open Bethlehem and ways to get involved, visit: www.openbethlehem.org.



Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi is a graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and a member of a United Methodist church in Carson Valley, Nev.

The author's father. Photo provided

The most meaningful time of life

A daughter reflects on her father's experience in Civilian Public Service.

by Bev Miller

My father struggled with finding the right job for his skills. In his lifetime he had at least 17 jobs but never seemed to find his professional niche. But there was one time in his life where he shone brightly. This was when he was called to go into Civilian Public Service at age 24. ▶

His life broadened when he left for CPS. The country was at war, and these years seemed to draw in Daddy a newfound strength and courage. He dealt well with the crisis mode of the time, went to his Mennonite bishop, John Lapp, and told him he wanted to be classified as a conscientious objector when he was called by the draft board. So John wrote a letter to the draft board, most likely the Lansdale, Pa., draft board, confirming Daddy's decision. Soon, Daddy was called to Grottoes, Va., the former Civilian Conservation Corps camp where many in Franconia Conference began their CPS tenure.

I have heard many heartwarming stories of men Daddy met in Grottoes and later Bowie and Clear Spring, Md., but above all, I believe, Daddy experienced a spiritual awakening and a personal epiphany like none he had ever experienced. I believe he was nurtured and entrusted with responsibility and a strong faith in God to overcome some of the ways he was put down as a child. He laughed with the other men, worked hard and experienced life to the fullest. He also witnessed other denominations in the camp and in that way was exposed to people and other faiths outside the small confines of his Mennonite community.

The men had nightly Bible studies that challenged them and helped them experience God's calling in their lives.

It was a whole new world to have a Peace Committee formed by the Mennonite Church and to present its ideas for an alternative service option to the President of the United States. There was a lot at stake, and the Franconia Conference believed in their young men, supporting them financially, emotionally and spiritually, believing that in this time of great pain around the world, their young men were making a difference. It was a strong statement made by the peace churches: Mennonite, Brethren in Christ, and Friends. They went up against the powers that be that told them they needed to fight against an enemy as in World War I and said we need an alternative for our peace-abiding young men.

This had a profound impact on my dad, who was the sixth boy in the family. He had a determined cry as a newborn, which led him to be slapped across the face for wanting to be nursed so often. He looked bad enough that he could not be taken to church that week. He was named Charles Merrill, after his dad, in hopes that that might bring about a girl in the family. As was typical of the time, Daddy never heard that he was loved by his parents. His mother seemed to prefer his mild-mannered brother, who shared his feelings more readily than Daddy, who was by nature more emotionally distant. His dad taught Daddy to hunt and spent many days with him pursuing grouse, squirrel and pheasant. He taught him to trap muskrats in order to sell their skins, but apparently he rarely laughed or expressed much affirmation. Many in that day believed that to praise your children would create in them a false pride, which could damage their faith.

The author's father in CPS. Photo provided

But during CPS, John Mosemann took a personal interest in Daddy and had him lead worship with chalk talks and found ways to encourage and pull out Daddy's gifts. Daddy was artistic and saw the beauty in God's creation. He also had organizational skills and could type, which helped him earn an office job while serving in Clear Spring. The men had nightly Bible studies that challenged them and helped them experience God's calling in their lives. They were called to serve in this time as a witness of God's redeeming presence and felt the importance of it.

In a file that my dad kept while in CPS of all the incoming and outgoing CPS "boys," one campmate wrote: "During my time at camp, I learned to know God better. I know I've benefited by it greatly spiritually. I had more time to think on and study His Word than if I had never entered CPS. I also think this life has given me a chance to prove my faith in God to a certain extent, for I think we have gone through some persecution, although not to the fullest measure. Another highlight of my camp experience is meeting and associating with so many fellows I never met before. It is interesting to see how they live and what they think about religious things. I found out that there were a lot more faiths and churches than I ever thought there were. Still another highlight is how much new country I saw. It was interesting to see the Rockies, the big trees of California, the Salt Lake, the prairies and many other beauties created by God. Living close to nature helped me feel the power of God. I am glad for my experience but very anxious for peace and [going] home."

But things were not easy when these boys came home. For my dad, he had a newborn baby girl and a family to provide for upon his release in 1946. He started working at a broom factory in Telford, Pa., and soon at a shoe factory, then back to the hosiery mill of his father. It was a rude awakening for these young men to come home after being spiritually and emotionally nurtured for four years. Leaders of Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church saw unique abilities in my dad, enough to include him in the spring 1948 ministerial lot.

As my dad used to tell the story, there were four men on that Sunday morning, across from four Bibles, when one of the other men took the Bible in front of my dad. I never heard Daddy say he felt like he should have been the one chosen; he only spoke of the honor of being called to this task, his willingness to serve if the lot had fallen on him and a solemn relief tinged with a tad of wistfulness, wondering what might have been. I'm sure my dad wondered how his life would have been different had he been called to be a minister at Souderton.

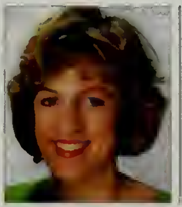
As Daddy's search for a good job continued, his family was growing in size. He remained active in the church and held roles such as Sunday school superintendent while working nights at JW Rex Heat Treating Company. By 1961, he had five children and was still searching for that elusive right job. Mom and he attended the CPS reunions every year, and Daddy enjoyed this time of reminiscing. This was a constant among layoffs and company downsizing.

Life felt like a constant fight to provide for his family, so when a call came in 1956 to serve at Salem Mennonite Church, Daddy felt like he couldn't do it. Somewhere he had lost his peace and contentment of camp days, and the fight to keep his head above water had won. No wonder he talked so lovingly of people he knew in camp, including the guy who said, "Could you be so kind and condescending, so obliging and back-bending to extinguish your nocturnal illuminator?" And the guy who wanted to be awakened in the middle of the night just to know what it would feel like to be able to go back to sleep. He told these stories with a big smile on his face and an irrepressible zest for life.

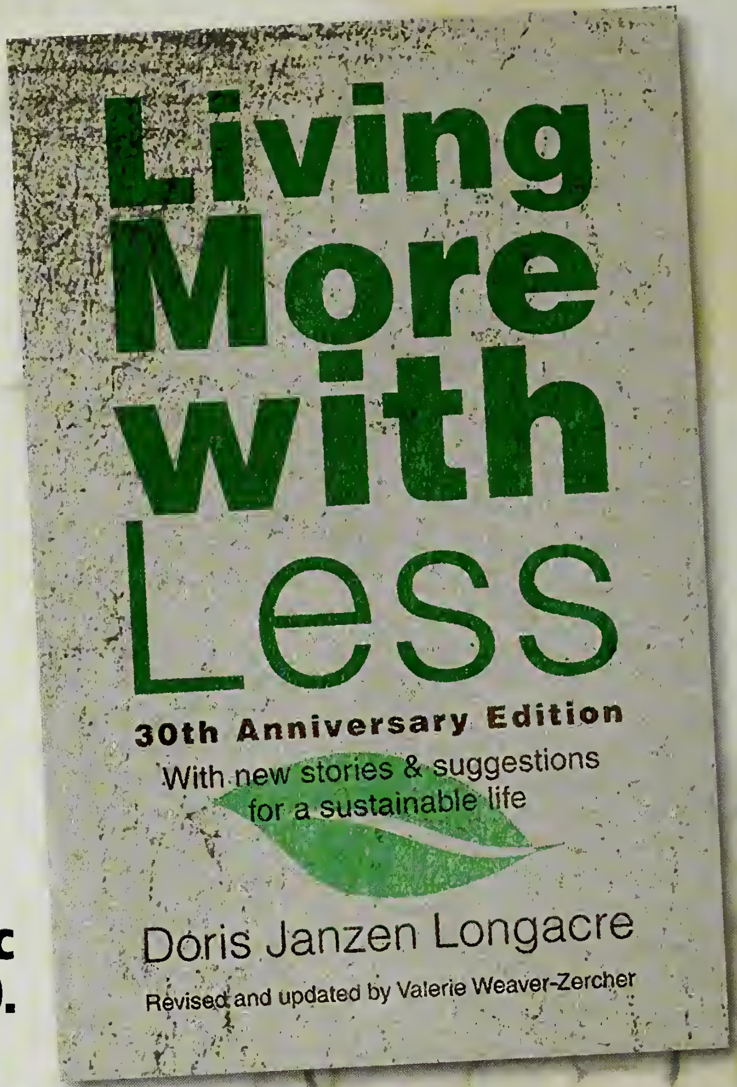
Over the years, Mom and Daddy traveled to places around the country, including Oklahoma and Montana, to visit "camp buddies." He didn't often write letters but managed to stay in contact with a Martins in Oklahoma and a Hostetler in Montana. When Daddy passed away, there were many camp buddies that needed to be contacted of his death.

There is nothing like feeling God's calling in your life and feeling like you are fulfilling God's purposes for you.

There is nothing like feeling God's calling in your life and feeling like you are fulfilling God's purposes for you. Perhaps this wasn't discussed much in my dad's time, but if I read between the lines, I see that the one time my dad felt called was during his CPS service. A few years before he died, he said he wanted to be remembered as a "faithful member of the church, as someone who faced responsibilities squarely (paid bills on time and saved for a rainy day), tried to encourage other people, especially his children and grandchildren, and gave four years of [his] life for a principle—nonresistance." This he did.



Bev Miller is a member of Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.



A Mennonite classic turns 30.

Humility, humus and humor

by Valerie Weaver-Zercher

Editing a book about living simply has a way of throwing one's own hypocrisy into stark relief. When I began work on the 30th anniversary edition of *Living More with Less* for Herald Press, I knew I'd have to face the many ways I failed to make choices that were mindful of global poverty and climate change. What I didn't expect was the sense I suddenly had that Doris Janzen Longacre and the contributors to *Living More with Less* were peering around the shelves at Target, watching me finger those plush crimson towels I really didn't need, and glowering at me at the grocery store when I furtively bought apples from Chile or packets of instant oatmeal shot through with sugar.

But you can only read so many submissions from hundreds of folks committed to living simply before you have to acknowledge the yawning rift between your own ideals and practice. As Brian McLaren writes in the afterword of the new edition of *Living More with Less*, "There's always another light to be turned off, another degree of heating or cooling to be sacrificed, another dessert or drive to be foregone." For although I had already tried to mold my household in more-with-less directions, I was increasingly perplexed by the countless changes we hadn't yet made. The more-with-less crowd felt to me like some elite club of what Leonard Dow calls, in his chapter in the new edition, "radical rock stars": people of privilege who choose to live with less—and then get a lot of attention for doing so.

When green equals cool. And Dow is right. In an era in which sustainability has become trendy, both for economic and environmental reasons, people who choose to live with less may become, unwittingly, the center of attention. No one needs to be told how cool it is to be green these days, and Lauren Weber, author of the new book *In Cheap We Trust*, adds that, thanks to a tanking economy, "Cheap is the new green."

So while they might not have known it, the contributors to the 1980 volume of *Living More with Less* were at the forefront of a shift in culture. Many of them were convinced of something a few decades before most people in Canada and the United States: We can't burn through resources and money and forests and fuel without consequence. In fact, one of the funnier aspects of this convergence occurs when celebrities such as Cindy Crawford and Ted Danson start sounding like 1970s Mennonites. ("We are meant to be stewards of this time that we're here," Danson told a reporter recently.)

As an antidote to a fashionable version of living more with less, Dow suggests we tell and listen to the stories of the working poor, who have been making do with less for a long time, instead of only to the stories of the privileged who choose less. While celebrity endorsement of ecological responsibility can be a good thing, listening to the poor is something that the fashionable green frugality has yet to learn.

Always rising bar. But whether I focused on the stories of the poor who make do with less or the privileged who choose less, it still felt like a club I couldn't belong to unless I gave up a lot more privilege, a lot more stuff and maybe even my dreams of doing more with my days than hanging up laundry and freezing corn. I wondered whether I had it in me to go any farther toward the always rising bar of green, frugal living. And I wondered, as a woman with vocational aspirations other than household management, which is where the nitty-gritty decisions about thrift and creation care are often made, whether I even wanted to. The "great cloud of witnesses" created by Doris and the contributors to her books started to feel a tad suffocating. I went through enough self-reflection to merit a trophy from a therapist and at times considered writing off the whole book as a slightly addled exercise in unhealthy asceticism.

I realized that inconsistency isn't the same thing as hypocrisy, and sometimes God's grace appears just when you need it.

But here's the thing: Somewhere along the way, as stories and tips for the book continued streaming in, I realized that inconsistency isn't the same thing as hypocrisy, and sometimes God's grace appears just when you need it. Somewhere along the way, the dour, judgmental expressions my imagination had placed on the faces of Doris and her peers changed to looks of encouragement, understanding and compassion. Somewhere along the way, I felt energized by their ideas and grateful for their witness. And I took a few more teensy steps toward the kind of more-with-less living they were calling me to—not out of guilt or peer pressure, but out of desire.

'Testimony meeting.' I'm not sure how this happened, but I'm grateful it did. I think it had something to do with the spirit in which the contributors wrote their entries. They offer their stories—of biking to the grocery store and celebrating Christmas without gifts and using fireless cookers and starting a church garden—not to shame me or pressure me but to share the joy that such actions have brought them. They want to tell me about the first word in the phrase "more with less," not just the second.

And eventually I realized that their testimonies are just that: not sermons or tirades or smug advice but testimonies. *Living More with Less* is a kind of testimony meeting, Doris Janzen Longacre wrote in her introduction to the 1980 edition, and she reminded her readers what a testimony meeting actually does: "Such a meeting does not report how God always acts or how people always respond," she wrote. "It never assumes common experience—otherwise there would be no point at all in holding it. A testimony meeting expects that God gives unique skills and experiences to people and communities and that sharing stories will strengthen everyone who hears. A testimony meeting believes in 'many gifts, one Spirit.'"

From ambivalence to grace. My shift from a defensive read of Doris' and the other contributors' writing to an open read was subtle, and it took time. Readers of the 30th anniversary edition may find themselves similarly conflicted as they read the pages of this book. But, as with Scripture or a good friend's advice, sometimes the things that make us the most uncomfortable are the ones that we need to hear. And sometimes our discomfort gets transformed, or at least tinted, by grace.

I still worry about what the contributors to the new edition of *Living More with Less* would think if they knew that their editor still doesn't have a rain barrel and that she sometimes feeds her kids hot dogs. (Except now they do.) But just as I'm learning grace with myself and others, I think most of the contributors have walked this journey as well. They know the ways that they, too, fail to live up to their more-with-less ideals, and the way God loves them just the same. And they're humbler and happier for living in what Doris Janzen Longacre called the "holy frustration" of more-with-less life.

Indeed, humility and happiness can't be underestimated. "Humility is a word that must characterize our relationship to the coming world," writes Sheri Hostetler in the new edition of *Living More with Less*. "Humility means knowing our place in relationship to the Creator and creation. It also comes from the same root as the word humus, the rich organic matter from which healthy plant life emerges, and humor." We will need all three, Hostetler writes—humility, humus and humor—to face the challenges of a stressed world in the years ahead.

And many of us will need humility, humus and humor tomorrow, too, when we are faced with decisions about towels and apples and oatmeal. Doris Janzen Longacre and the contributors to *Living More with Less* won't be doing surveillance of our shopping and living habits, as I once imagined. But they will be rooting for us, hoping we can find more by taking less.

Valerie Weaver-Zercher is editor of the 30th anniversary edition of Living More with Less, *published by Herald Press. She is a writer and editor in Mechanicsburg, Pa. More information about the book can be found at www.mpn.net/livingmorewithless.*

As with Scripture or a good friend's advice, sometimes the things that make us the most uncomfortable are the ones that we need to hear.

istockphoto.com /Thomas Perkins

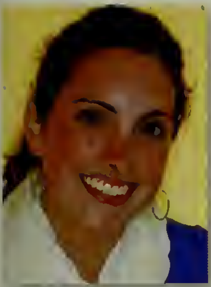
YOUNG ADULT

story collectors

by Anna Groff

Twenty-year-old Esther Shank's generation faces overwhelming influence of the "green" movement on a daily basis.

"Almost everything in the stores now have a 'green' label on them, but what does it really mean to be green?" she says. "And how can one be green without spending all the money the stores demand for their green products?"


Esther Shank

This year, Shank worked as a young adult story collector for *Living More with Less 30th Anniversary Edition with New Stories and Suggestions for Living a Sustainable Life*.

"This book can give a lot of answers to these questions," Shank says. She is a student at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and is from West Liberty, Ohio.

Valerie Weaver-Zercher (page 24), editor of this edition, says she chose young adults as story collectors because "many of the young adults I know are far ahead of where I am in terms of their awareness of climate change and global poverty and their willingness to make lifestyle decisions based on these realities."

She also wanted the book to feel relevant to young people and not serve simply as a "commemorative or nostalgic edition that would be meaningful only to people who remembered its publication in 1980," she says.

The five story collectors were born after the first edition came out, and for Shank the timing excited her. Just months before Valerie asked her to help with the book she finished reading Doris Janzen Longacre's first edition of *Living More with Less*. Longacre died of cancer in 1979 at age 39, before she completed the original manuscript.

Another young adult story collector, Karina Kreider, says her interviews demonstrated the importance of small decisions in daily life. She interviewed 10 people and wrote 13 articles, although the book does not include all of them.

"Decisions like being aware of how you dress and how you use leftovers take little effort, yet can make a large impact," she says.

Kreider says her generation often faces the notion of living simply, but "what that means, practically, is often left out or too vague to be of any true value. … Stories of what people around us are doing are of huge importance in closing the gap between the theoretical and the applicable."

Kreider studies theology at Theologischen Seminar Bienenberg, the European Mennonite Bible school in Switzerland. She grew up in Akron, Pa., and is a member of Pilgrims Mennonite Church.

Paul Boers, 23, a story collector from Elkhart, Ind., says the new edition offers insights on technology and Internet use—issues and dynamics Longacre did not face in her day.

Paul Boers

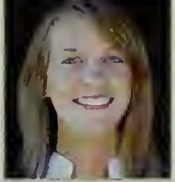
"It's always important for a community to go back and evaluate its values in the face of what's happening in the broader world," he says.

Boers says an unusual story from two young men who biked to Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay in 2009 stands out as a reminder of the rewards of sustainable life choices.

Boers works as a children's librarian and a correspondent for *The Elkhart Truth*.

At times the project felt overwhelming to Weaver-Zercher. "I constantly worried about whether I was getting the balance of old material and new material right," she says. "I also worried that the contributors were, in general, a fairly privileged group of people who are choosing to live with less."

She says she especially appreciated the stories of groups of people who were doing more-with-less things together, which "helped me move beyond the question of, What can I change in my own little household? to, What can I do with others to work on these issues?"



Anna Groff is associate editor of The Mennonite.

story

by J. Nelson Kraybill

The Sennacherib Prism at the Oriental Institute in Chicago

Photo provided

If some miracle of time travel allowed reporters from Fox News, National Public Radio and your preferred Christian magazine all to witness the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C., they probably would file three very different stories of the event. Our time-traveling journalists would all observe several hundred thousand Assyrian troops, under the command of King Sennacherib of Assyria, approaching Jerusalem with unfriendly intent. But even if the journalists all pledged to present just the facts, their stories would differ. They would emphasize different aspects of the episode. They would ascribe developments to different causes and would reflect different values and allegiances.

There is no such thing as values-free reporting, politics or history.

Actually, we do have three ancient versions of the Sennacherib story. Differences in those accounts can help us understand political polarities that sometimes strain relationships today at family reunions, church institutions or congregational potlucks. Political differences become especially heated when fanned by fears of terrorism, economic instability or religious extremism.

Jerusalem and national security

Despite genuine threats to modern America, our national security is far less precarious than that of Judah under King Hezekiah (ca. 715–687 B.C.). In 722 B.C. the Assyrians devoured Samaria, capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, after a three-year siege. The 10 northern tribes of Israel disappeared into exile, never to emerge again in history.

Now in 701 B.C., the Southern Kingdom of Judah trembled as Assyria closed a noose around their capital of Jerusalem. King Sennacherib of Assyria was more interested in defeating the mighty armies of Egypt than in capturing a tiny Jewish nation. But Sennacherib wanted Judah as a tax-paying vassal state in the Assyrian orbit, and it angered him when Hezekiah resisted and tried to align with Egypt.

The following are three different accounts of how events unfolded:

1. As told by Jews: an angel saved Jerusalem

In 2 Kings (18:13–19:37) we have the biblical account of Sennacherib's response to Hezekiah's rebellion. The Assyrian captured all fortified cities of Judah except Jerusalem, then demanded that Hezekiah send him a huge sum of money. Intimidated, Hezekiah stripped gold from the temple in Jerusalem and otherwise plundered national wealth to make the payment. Not satisfied, Sennacherib sent his troops to Jerusalem with this sneering message: "On whom do you now rely, that you have rebelled against me? See, you are relying now on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff."

Sennacherib even claimed that Yahweh, the God of the Jews, had ordered him to take Judah and destroy it. Assyrian deputies tried to influence popular opinion in Jerusalem by publicly proclaiming, "Do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, Yahweh will deliver us. Have any of the gods of the nations ever delivered its land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" A frightened Hezekiah tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth and went to the temple to pray. He sent advisors to consult the prophet Isaiah, who replied with this message: Do not be afraid; Yahweh will cause Sennacherib to return to his own land.

In the temple, Hezekiah prayed, "O Lord our God, save us … so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you … are God alone." Isaiah sent a second encouraging oracle to Hezekiah: Sennacherib will not come into Jerusalem or shoot an arrow there or build a siege ramp against it. "For I will defend this city to save it," Yahweh said. The biblical account ends with this decisive turn of events:

That very night the angel of Yahweh set out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; when the morning dawned, they were all dead bodies. Then King Sennacherib of Assyria left, went home and lived at Nineveh. As he was worshiping in the house of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with the sword" (2 Kings 19:35–37).

From the Jewish perspective, Sennacherib's army was literally stopped dead by an act of Yahweh.

Despite genuine threats to modern America, our national security is far less precarious than that of Judah under King Hezekiah.

2. As told by Sennacherib: I caged Hezekiah like a bird

How might Sennacherib have reported his foray into Palestine? We have his version recorded on a six-sided clay prism (ca. 690 B.C.) now at the Oriental Institute in Chicago [see photo]. The hexagonal tablet tells how the "terror-inspiring splendor" of Sennacherib's "lordship" overwhelmed regional coalitions during eight military campaigns. These campaigns took place throughout the Near East, and Sennacherib says this about his ventures in Syria-Palestine:

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. … I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity and conquered them by means of well-stamped earth-ramps and battering-rams brought thus near to the walls combined with the attack by foot soldiers, using mines, breeches as well as [trenches]. …

[Hezekiah] himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a ▶

Nelson Kraybill's daughter Laura views the Sennacherib Prism at the Oriental Institute in Chicago
Photo provided

> cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate. … Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute and the … presents due to me as his overlord … to be delivered annually.

Sennacherib claims that he forced the Judean king to send 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver to Assyria, along with a long list of treasures, including Hezekiah's own daughters and palace women. According to the Assyrian record, Sennacherib had great success against the Jews. Nothing about an angel of the Lord striking down 185,000 of his troops.

Perhaps we should consider who is telling the stories we hear today of current events.

3. As told by Herodotus: the gods sent mice

The Greek historian Herodotus (ca. 484–425 B.C.) provides a third account of Sennacherib's fortunes. This version places the decisive turning point of the Assyrian campaign in the Nile River delta rather than at Jerusalem. Herodotus tells how King Sethos of Egypt panicked as Sennacherib's army moved into his country. Sethos entered a temple of the god Hephaestus to lament and pray.

"In his lamentation he fell asleep," Herodotus says, "and dreamt that he saw the god standing over him and bidding him take courage, for he should suffer no ill" from the army of Sennacherib. "Myself," the god promised King Sethos, "will send you champions."

Like the account in 2 Kings, Herodotus credits divine intervention—by a different god—for Sennacherib's decision to abandon his military campaign. As the Assyrians encroached on Egypt, the champions appeared:

> One night a multitude of field mice swarmed over the Assyrian camp and devoured their quivers and their bows and the handles of their shields likewise, insomuch that they fled the next day unarmed, and many fell.

Herodotus notes that still in his day—more than two centuries after Sennacherib's invasion—there was a statue of King Sethos in the temple of Hephaestus in Egypt. The king had a mouse in his hand and an inscription on the statue read, "Look on me, and fear the gods."

Which story is true?

So which of these accounts is true? Perhaps all three are largely factual, but three different sets of values and allegiances shaped how the stories got told. The biblical account values historic Jewish faith, assuming that Yahweh is in control of history. The author centers the story on Jerusalem, believes Yahweh answers prayer and reflects a certainty that someday rulers who arrogantly defy Yahweh will be humbled and punished.

Sennacherib's account reinforces the Assyrian king's own prestige and glory. The clay tablets betray a trust in military might, highlighting the "terror-inspiring splendor" of the Assyrian ruler. Abject allegiance to the Assyrian empire is expected, and anyone who does not submit to the yoke will get crushed. Material wealth is a measure of success, and Sennacherib chortles over the tribute payments he received from Judah.

As a Greek, writing two centuries after the events, Herodotus had less personal stake in the story than did biblical or Assyrian authors. Herodotus nevertheless reveals that he values the gods—even Egyptian gods. He believes that gods intervene in history to make even field mice turn world events. He honors the memory of the Pharaoh who stood up to Assyrian aggression. Jerusalem matters so little to Herodotus that it does not even get mentioned in the story of Sennacherib abandoning his campaign in Palestine.

Who tells the news we get today?

If the same event in ancient history got told in such differing ways, perhaps we should consider who is telling the stories we hear today of current events. It is not sufficient simply to trust that a given news source provides "just the facts." Which facts, and how are they put together into a coherent narrative? What values and allegiances shape the selection of facts and the telling of the story?

When I was a child, there were three TV networks in the United States, and those three delivered news to most Americans. Now there are hundreds of TV channels and thousands of websites and blogs and any number of print publications. In this fragmented communication environment, it is easy to find sources of information that reinforce opinions and values already held by the consumer. Even news sources that claim to be balanced and include a spectrum of voices will find ways to give the last word or to make one side of the argument look ignorant. Some channels of communication constantly stoke fear or political conflict as a form of entertainment or as a way to boost ratings.

Christians should think critically about the motives and agenda that shape the news we receive. We should pay particular attention to reporters and commentators who build bridges of understanding rather than increase polarities or stoke hatred. The same concerns should inform which political parties or candidates we support and which histories we trust. There is no such thing as values-free reporting, politics or history; all have underlying values and allegiances.

Values Christians should seek

Regardless of the ideological stance of information sources or political candidates we favor, we should never give them unquestioning support. Our first allegiance is to Jesus and the gospel, not to some other entity. Even politicians, reporters or historians who claim to be Christian may advance positions that are contrary to the gospel.

In evaluating news sources or political positions, Christians should look for values. These may include the following:

1. Concern for global, not just national interests. As Christians, we give allegiance to the worldwide reign of God rather than to just one country.
2. A preference for nonviolent ways of solving conflict. Followers of Jesus should not champion military or coercive solutions.
3. Respect for people of other opinions and religions. Sneering and fear-mongering have no place in Christian witness.
4. Compassion for those who suffer at the margins. Christians should care about immigrants, the homeless, victims of bigotry and other vulnerable people.
5. Stewardship of the physical world. Biblical people should respect God's creation and be informed about global warming and depletion of the earth's resources.
6. Commitment to preserving human life. Followers of the Lamb should not support killing in war, killing in the womb or killing by capital punishment.

No news source, politician or historian will match all the values that we see in Jesus, but some come closer than others. Some channels of information sound like Sennacherib, others sound like Herodotus, and a few resonate with the gospel.

It is healthy for Christians to get news and editorial comment from a variety of perspectives and sources. We may find it possible to scan several national or international newspapers or to read both liberal and conservative religious magazines—even if we get most of our news from a preferred point on the bias spectrum. Always we must measure what we learn against the high standard set by Jesus.

For believers to gain such critical interpretive skills, the church needs prophetic teaching and preaching that instills gospel values—including the value of professing Christ as Lord and inviting others to know him. We need this formation in values and mission more than we need advocacy for particular news sources or political platforms. Then the people of God must look to Scripture, to promptings of the Spirit and to the Christian community for discernment in how to read signs of the times.

> There is no such thing as values-free reporting, politics or history; all have underlying values and allegiances.

J. Nelson Kraybill is author of Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation *(Brazos Press, 2010).*

Photo provided

Sennacherib on a bas relief at the Oriental Institute in Chicago

DEC. 10: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

A day for justice

by Tim Shenk

Advent is a time when we relive the ancient longing for the Messiah, from Isaiah's mystic prophesies to Mary's exultations in God's goodness and justice.

"He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly," Mary declares in Luke 1:52-53. "He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty."

A theme of radical, social justice runs throughout the salvation story, so it is fitting that during the second week of Advent, people around the world will celebrate an international holiday in honor of human rights.

Human Rights Day, observed Dec. 10, commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

Coming in response to the horrors of World War II, the declaration was a promise by the world's governments to protect the poor and the oppressed, treat everyone fairly, ensure an adequate standard of living and guarantee freedom of expression and belief, among other things.

As we celebrate Jesus' birth, let us work to change this world according to the justice of his kingdom.

The declaration's ideas have since been written into numerous constitutions and treaties, and it serves as the unofficial charter of the worldwide movement for human rights. It calls upon "every individual and every organ of society … to promote respect for these rights and freedoms."

As Christians, we should celebrate Human Rights Day as an affirmation of God's love and concern for suffering people.

The idea of human rights has deep roots in our faith. From the creation story, we know that human beings are made in God's image and worthy of respect. The prophets taught that the most vulnerable people—the widows, orphans, immigrants and debtors—deserve special consideration and assistance.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that a righteous person will help any stranger in need. It does not even matter whether you belong to the same group or believe the same thing.

But living justly is only part of the divine story. The Bible teaches not only justice but mercy and love. And love, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13, is the greatest of all spiritual gifts, without which all human efforts are empty and meaningless.

Perhaps this is why governments often fail to respect human rights in practice. Abusive states still imprison thousands of "prisoners of conscience" for no reason other than their beliefs. Massive economic deprivation continues despite the trillions of dollars in the global economy. Even slavery lives on in many forms around the globe.

Our troubled world, as in Isaiah's time, needs a savior. Isaiah prophesied that the Prince of Peace will establish a kingdom "with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore" (Isaiah 9:7).

As we celebrate Jesus' birth, let us work to change this world according to the justice of his kingdom.

Tim Shenk is a master's degree student of international affairs at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. He is a member of Manhattan (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship.

The light of the world

by D. Lowell Nissley

What does this mean for us?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). H also said (Sermon on the Mount), "You are the light of the world." This is a different matter. Do you suppose he means me? If so, to whom am I supposed to shine? There's an awful lot of darkness in the world these days. In fact, darkness seems to be everywhere. On what should I focus my light, or should I just let it shine, like the song we used to sing, "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."

In any case, how does one argue with Jesus' assertion, "You are the light of the world"? Where our light shines is up to us—either by choice or default. We can put it under a bushel basket, but it's still shining (just covered up). Or we can put it on a lamp stand, where it will light up the whole room. Or we can put it on top of City Hall, where it will illuminate the whole community. Or maybe the Pentagon—could it penetrate as far as Afghanistan? At 186,000 miles per second, how long would it take? One thing is sure, you don't chase darkness with more darkness.

The Anabaptist light has been shining now for over 480 years, while in the early days many forces tried to extinguish it. One mood these days would turn down the Anabaptist light and turn up a more popular neon light or restrict the light to shine only under a cultural basket. The truth is, the effectiveness of Anabaptist light will not be measured by how bright our light shines behind the wagons. It will be measured by how well it spotlights Anabaptist core values: discipleship, nonconformity to the world and agape love.

Discipleship

Jesus did not come as a politician, CEO or any power figure. He came as a show-and-tell to demonstrate how we should live. He then died to make it possible.

For the Anabaptist, faith is more than a belief in the birth and death of Jesus. It is a daily commitment to the life of Jesus within us.

Nonconformity to the world

Paul wrote: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Romans 12:2).

God is petitioning us to embrace a different system of values than practiced by the secular world around us. Notice "the renewing of your mind." The wiring in the brain has made some new connections. What we used to think made sense now is foolishness.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a 'fool' so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. "For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength" (1 Corinthians 1:25).

The woman who "wasted" a year's salary on perfume for Jesus' head (Matthew 23:6-7) did not make sense to worldly values.

The world cries, "Vengeance"; Jesus says, "Forgive." The world climbs ladders for success; Jesus achieves success by being a servant. The world seeks power; the Christian finds power through the humility of Christ.

God is petitioning us to embrace a different system of values than practiced by the secular world around us.

Agape love

For those who speak English there is only one word for "love," and it has to cover the whole waterfront—from Hollywood and sex to pumpkin pie and everything in between. The New Testament gives us a choice of words, so we can talk about brotherhood, family, God and some other things. The most important is "agape"—the love that goes first, goes all the way and has no limits. This is the love God has for us. Jesus used agape when he told the young man that to love God was more important than all the laws and prophets (that's a mouthful when talking to a Hebrew in those days), and he added that the second most important was to love your neighbor as yourself. Then he ratcheted it up to, "Love your enemies."

I suspect God would click his heels if every Anabaptist congregation had a reputation for, "Behold, how they love (agape) one another."

D. Lowell Nissley is a member of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla.

Why do women say no?

Marty Lehman is associate executive director for churchwide operations for Mennonite Church USA.

A recent audit of women in leadership in Mennonite Church USA provided considerable data on the number of women in leadership roles. As we shared this data across the church, we heard a common question: "Why are women always saying no when asked to take on a leadership role within Mennonite Church USA?"

At a Constituency Leaders Council meeting, we heard that the Leadership Discernment Committee works carefully to ensure good gender balance in their board appointments. But then women turn down the invitations to lead. These "no" responses result in fewer women serving on boards and in leadership roles, and the Leadership Discernment Committee is then blamed for not putting enough women in leadership roles.

Why do women say no? There are many reasons why women tend to say no more quickly than men. The following reasons are generalized and do not represent all women.

An article in the Sept. 27 issue of *Newsweek* on changes in gender roles states that "the average wife still does roughly double the housework of the average husband: the equivalent of two full workdays of additional chores each week. Even when the man is unemployed, the woman handles a majority of the domestic workload, and it's the same story with child care. If both parents are working, women spend 400 percent more time with the kids." Women tend to have less discretionary time than do men.

Women also tend to be less driven by titles, egos and status than men are. They tend to have identities other than through their employment. Many take lower-paying jobs or part-time jobs so as to have more time for children and families. Their time and their relationships are important to them. Churchwide assignments take a lot of time, thus women are more likely to say no.

Women who are of an age to be moderator of Mennonite Church USA, for example, are also more likely to be serving in traditionally female roles—as teachers, nurses, secretaries—that often don't permit them the flexibility to take on a churchwide assignment. Fewer Baby Boomer women are administrators, pastors, lawyers, doctors or CEOs. Therefore the pool of women available for some of these leadership roles is limited, compared with the pool of available men. When these women say no, it is more obvious than when a man says no.

While we have made great strides in gender balance on a variety of fronts, the reality is that we are still a white-male-dominated church and society. Too often we still have a "token" woman on a committee or board or in an employment situation. Being the only female voice is not easy. I've lost track of how many meetings I have attended where I was the only female. I've also lost track of how many times I've made a suggestion or comment that was ignored, but when a male colleague made the same comment, action was taken. Unfortunately this even happens with open-minded male co-workers and committee members.

> While we have made great strides in gender balance on a variety of fronts, the reality is that we are still a white-male-dominated church and society.

Working at gender balance and equality is an ongoing process. I celebrate that Mennonite Church USA has made progress in affirming women's leadership gifts and abilities. For example, we have more female pastors now than ever before in our history. And I observe that young adults are less bound by gender roles. In another 20 years we will be at a different place. I hope we won't be hearing complaints about women saying no in 2030. TM

Lessons from the teachers in my life

Teachers infiltrate my life. I work with them, I relate to the ones that have taught (and continue to teach) my children, I see budding educators at my school. Many of my own teachers have been wonderful and have opened new worlds to me. For instance, there is the fourth-grade teacher who insisted we memorize the works of African American poets. I carry those poems in my heart to this day. Even the not-so-wonderful teachers have made a mark on me. The start of a new school year thrills me with the anticipation of new beginnings, fresh pages in the notebook, sharp points on the pencil.

I am a student. My first teacher was my mom. As my parent, Mom taught me many things—how to say please and thank you, how to tie my shoes, how to be honest (this lesson involved a march back to the store and an apology for appropriating a roll of Necco Wafers). But Mom also spent most of her working life as an early childhood educator, and my preschool years with her came during the time she was growing into her identity as a teacher. Mom has an affinity and love for small children and infinite patience with the intensive, hands-on care that kind of work requires. After taking care of children (her own and others) in her home, she began working at day-care centers. For many years she worked right at our church.

My mother made me recognize the importance of being involved in one's world and doing service as a matter of course.

Mom was also passionate about shaping nurturing spaces for children everywhere, not just at school. Because she wanted to study the effects of environment on children's development, Mom went back to school for her master's degree when I was in junior high. I only know this because she has reported it to me—my own adolescent self-centeredness apparently has blocked any memory of Mom being a student while we kids were all still at home. After finishing her degree she moved into administrative positions and was involved in community youth theater, local politics and writing groups. In the midst of all of this, she made a home for us. I think I love school—both sides of the desk—because of my mother. She didn't make it look effortless, but she made it look vital and necessary. She made me recognize the importance of being involved in one's world and doing service as a matter of course. Because of my mother, I am a teacher.

And now I am thrilled to welcome a new teacher in my life. Not long ago I got a call from my son, who had just finished teaching his first full lesson to a class of high school seniors. This is a miracle of sorts, in my view, as this is the son I was prepared to see drop out of high school. His adolescence was hard on our entire family, and I found myself sitting across the desk from the principal more times than I care to remember. Fortunately the principal, although as frustrated by my son's behavior as I was, did not give up on him. At the end of each of our meetings, he assured me he knew my son was a good kid, a smart kid, and that he would come around. Our church family, too, was a wonderful support.

It was a hard time, but we came through it, my son graduated and later that summer announced he wanted to go to college. An open enrollment policy at a nearby state university let him enter that fall. Eventually, after doing some remedial work and getting up to speed, he decided on an education major. He already knows he wants to work with students who are labeled "at risk."

The day he called me, he was minutes out of the classroom after teaching the first full lesson on his own. "I loved it," he declared. I love that he loved it, and I am excited for his future students.

I want to remember always to be grateful for the teachers in my life, for teachers everywhere. My mother taught me well (even when she thought I wasn't listening). My son teaches me. I believe many teachers do what they do because they themselves had good teachers; I know this is true for me. I can't wait to see what will happen next. TM

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

The future, here and now

Jacob Elias is co-pastor at Parkview Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind., and author of *Remember the Future* (Herald Press, 2006).

When surfing stations on the car radio, I occasionally stumble across a preacher eager to persuade me to accept a "Bible prophecy" view of what God will yet do there and then. In our congregation, our worship reaches a climax when we sing, "Your will be done on earth, O Lord," and we pray the Lord 's Prayer. In these ways we express our longing for the future here and now: that God might reign on earth as in heaven and that as God's kingdom citizens we might participate faithfully in God's mission to the world.

These two scenarios of God's work are profoundly different. When Myron Augsburger's article "A Paracosmic Millennium" appeared in *The Mennonite* (March), I welcomed this contribution but was also troubled by it. I affirm his call to recognize God's dynamic reign as both already present and yet still future. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles consistently urge followers during this interim between "already" and "not yet" to live in accord with the values of God's still in-breaking reign.

What I find problematic is that Augsburger invites his readers to anticipate a paracosmic millennium. Drawing on the definitions included in a glossary of terms, this means that believers can look forward to a "1,000-year reign of Christ over and beyond the world."

This kind of postponement of the reign of Christ runs counter to Jesus' own appeal to his contemporaries to recognize the presence of the kingdom on the earth here and now. And this beckoning of the faithful to anticipate Christ's reign over and beyond the world feels like an abandonment of the world.

Self-described "Bible prophecy preachers" typically encourage such postponement and abandonment. I am content to let past arguments among millennialists be an urgent reminder not to repeat them in our time. We need rather to recover the urgency of the call of the risen Christ for his disciples to make disciples of all nations, teaching them, baptizing them and reassuring them, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." In the meantime, in the time interval between the incarnation and the triumphant coming of Christ, we participate with God as stewards of the earth. We are not invited to abandon the creation to inevitable destruction but to tend it, working with God, who continues to long for a renewed earth and heaven. We do not anticipate a postponement of such renewal. Through ongoing striving and praying for its greater realization, we anticipate its consummation in the fullness of time.

God's involvement in history has typically been understood as moving in a linear progression toward an "end" (understood as cessation). The ominous possibility of the destruction of the cosmos has been voiced by prophets and apostles who realized the frightening prospect of annihilation, if people continue their violent and abusive ways. However, much more prevalent has been the hopeful envisioning by prophets and apostles of a different "end": the goal of God's restorative justice.

> We are not invited to abandon the creation to inevitable destruction but to tend it, working with God, who continues to long for a renewed earth and heaven.

God's justice is revealed climactically in Jesus. It is lived out, albeit incompletely, by a people gripped by the vision of a new creation. This vision is given its social embodiment within diverse communities of Jesus' disciples empowered by God's Spirit. This Spirit moves these communities toward the consummation that our sovereign God continues to long to bring to reality. The other kind of "end" (annihilation) is still a risk, but it is not what God wants.

Millennial portrayals of the future find articulation in the symbolic world of John's apocalyptic vision. A thousand years is but one of many evocative images whereby he proclaims the ongoing sovereignty of God and the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth as in heaven. As to the timetable for the future, we defer to our sovereign God. We need to remember the future that has already been opened up for all those who confess Christ as Lord. This future is still to be consummated by God. This is the present and future kingdom in which we as individuals and faith communities are summoned to participate. TM

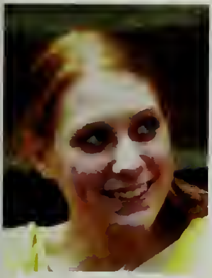
The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MVS worker killed while biking

20-year-old Mennonite Voluntary Service worker lived in Alamosa, Colo.

Chloe Weaver, a 20-year-old Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) participant, was killed Oct. 24, in Alamosa, Colo., when an automobile struck her while she was riding her bicycle.

Weaver had been serving with the La Jara unit of Mennonite Voluntary Service, a Mennonite Mission Network short-term service program, since August.


Chloe Weaver

Weaver, from Nederland, Colo., is the daughter of Cindy and Herm Weaver, conference minister for the Mountain States Mennonite Conference (MSMC).

Chloe Weaver worked with children and in a community gardening project at La Puente, an organization that provides emergency shelter, food assistance, transitional housing, self-sufficiency services, homeless prevention, community outreach services and job training for the homeless and other community members in crisis.

Weaver also previously worked in Denver in the summer of 2009 with the DOOR program, a joint short-term service program of Mennonite Mission Network and Presbyterian Church USA.

"There are few good words for this experience," Herm Weaver says. "The unspeakable loss is truly unspeakable but it is well matched by the truly unspeakable gift that Chloe has been for these past 20 years. We are grateful."

Immanuel Sila, MVS unit administrator, first met Chloe when she served with DOOR. He describes her as "willing to be challenged, energetic, a hard worker, kind and compassionate."

"She became one of my favorite people during that summer," he says.

Prior to beginning her MVS term, Weaver attended Hesston (Kan.) College for three semesters.

The Alamosa community, with a population of about 15,000 people, is tightknit and in shock, but they are also providing support for one another, says Del Hershberger, director of Mission Network's Christian service.

"The other workers at La Puente and in the community are feeling intense pain," he says, "but they're also banding together in this difficult time."

Weaver is survived by her parents, one sister, Hope, and one brother, Dillon.—*Mennonite Mission Network staff*

Larry Bartel

From left: Sister Hope Weaver and father Herm Weaver listen to Chloe Weaver during the Sept. 25, 2009, Centennial Homecoming Chapel at Hesston (Kan.) College.

MC Canada council recommends MPN-Third Way merger

General Board decision Nov. 13 is final approval needed for new organization.

Qualified support for the integration of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) and Third Way Media, a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network—that's what was expressed by the Mennonite Church Canada Formation Council meeting Oct. 19 at the Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp in southwestern Ontario.

"We think the merger of MPN and Third Way Media makes good sense," Dave Bergen said after the meeting, "and there is a lot of goodwill on our part for it." Bergen is executive secretary of Christian Formation.

But, he said, "we have concerns over how Canada and Canadian issues will be reflected by and incorporated into the culture of the new organization."

During the meeting, the Council heard a presentation by Ron Rempel, executive director of MPN, and Sheri Hartzler, interim co-director of Third Way Media. In addition to describing the process leading to the merger, Rempel and Hartzler also provided information about the work of Third Way Media. From 1956 to 1986, Third Way, formerly Mennonite Media Ministries, had staff in eastern Canada. Third Way Media's Third Way Café, a popular website and discussion forum, has featured Canadian writers since 2001. Of the average 9,700 monthly visitors to the site, about 1,000 are from Canada, a figure proportional to Canada's relative population.

Phil Bontrager, chair of MPN's board, also addressed the Council. The new entity, he said, will have enhanced ability to serve "the church's missional calling." Bontrager went on to describe the merger as the best option for future success for MPN and Third Way Media. Also participating in the meeting was Joan Pries, one of the three Canadian MPN board members who endorsed the plan and provided a written summary of the MPN board discussion.

Although the Council affirmed the merger, members expressed concern about whether the new organization would have a strong presence in Canada, whether it would adequately reflect Canadian culture and issues, and that the move from MPN's Scottdale, Pa., office to the Third Way Media office in Harrisonburg, Va., could make it seem even more distant from Canadians.

In response, Bontrager stressed that the new organization values "our relationship with Mennonite Church Canada ... we understand ourselves to be a binational agency."

Rempel noted that the new organization intends to maintain a strong Canadian presence through staff in Canada and by continuing to operate a Canadian distribution center. The yet-to-be-named organization is open to discussions about the center's location, which is now in Waterloo, Ont.

After a candid discussion with the MPN-Third Way delegation, the Council agreed to recommend that the Mennonite Church Canada General Board approve the merger. The Council further recommended that the new entity ensure Canadian involvement not only in governance, but also in staffing, operations, planning and production, and establish a review process to monitor the health and effectiveness of the organization in pursuing its binational mandate.

Andrew Reesor-McDowell, the moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, said that he will ask the General Board to respond to the Christian Formation Council recommendations as soon as possible (see update below).

He said: "I am very pleased with how MPN is working at challenges it faces for the future. The case for merger appears to make sense and appears to be a positive approach with potential synergies. We value the work of MPN." *—Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Publishing Network joint release*

Update: On Nov. 13, Mennonite Church Canada's general board unanimously approved the merger of Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media.*—Lisa Carr-Pries, Christian Formation Council, Mennonite Church Canada*

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Myers is Mennonite presence at U.S. Homeland Security

He says Mennonite Disaster Service has a 'platinum' reputation at FEMA.

Everett J. Thomas

David Myers (right) is the Obama administration's director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He was hosted at a Nov. 6 dinner in Goshen, Ind., by cartoonist Joel Kauffmann (left) and Mennonite Church USA staff member Nancy Kauffmann (center).

David Myers, a former Mennonite pastor, brings an Anabaptist presence to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

"Even though I haven't been actively part of the church for a number of years," Myers said at a small gathering in Goshen, Ind., on Nov. 6, "I do see what I've done as a ministry of the Mennonite church."

Myers, former pastor of Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kan., and Oak Park Mennonite Church (now Chicago Community Mennonite Church), caught the attention of an Obama campaign official through his 16 years of work with homelessness and HIV/AIDS ministries in Chicago. The connection enabled him to successfully apply for the position. The faith-based center works closely with FEMA, which is part of DHS.

"It's very clear that being a Mennonite and an ordained Mennonite minister in FEMA … has a peculiar ring to it," Myers said. "[But] It is an advantage to be identified with a group that is as deeply respected in the administration and White House."

Myers reports to Joshua DuBois, executive director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and to Craig Fugate, head of FEMA. It is within FEMA that Myers especially sees respect for the work done by Mennonites.

"Mennonite Disaster Service has a platinum reputation within FEMA," Myers said. "What they do in the world—MDS really is the hidden jewel. My work has been much less difficult because of MDS. No other Mennonite entity has been so connected with a federal agency."

Myers also noted several other organizations within the DHS that are of particular interest to Mennonites. These include the agencies that take up immigration issues. "Sometimes we're pulled into those conversations," Myers said, "and sometimes we assert ourselves in the conversation."

Myers also talked about the difficulty faced by Mennonite leaders from the global south who cannot get visas to attend meetings in the United States. Noting that the Department of State (not DHS) grants visas, Myers said there are some ways he and his office can assist the church with the entry process once visas have been granted.

"You can have a visa, but you still may not get into the country," he said. "We're spending a lot of time on that now," he said, because many church communions are experiencing the same issues. Mennonite World Conference is considering holding its global assembly in the United States in 2015. He also said that "there are legitimate security concerns" in the granting of visas.—*Everett J. Thomas*

VisitPittsburgh.com

An introduction to Pittsburgh, site of Convention 2011

John Stahl-Wert says there is 'a vast untapped treasury of humans in this city.'

Driving into Pittsburgh, you travel the entire distance from the airport without seeing even a glint of the city's beautiful skyline and rivers.

But then, with a suddenness that never grows old, you spill out of the Fort Pitt Tunnel into one of the greatest urban vistas in America.

A *New York Times* columnist once described this entrance, declaring Pittsburgh to be "the only city in America with a front door." *National Geographic* rated the "10 most beautiful sights" in America, including in their list only two cities—one of them Pittsburgh.

What will you be looking at when you're thrust into the center of Pittsburgh's downtown—or as we locals say it, dahntahn—on your way to Pittsburgh 2011?

Glance right and you'll see the muddy Monongahela River trudging northward from the tired steel valleys to our south. Use your imagination to see the smoke, blood and molten steel that filled these valleys for generations.

Glance forward to the horizon and you'll see the silver Allegheny River rushing in from the pristine streams, springs and mountain tributaries loved by fly fishermen to the north. French Catholics discovered this confluence of rivers 400 years ago by tracing this northern path.

Glance left and you'll see the stately Ohio, born where the Monongahela and the Allegheny converge. Like the children born of irascible immigrants, the Ohio takes on an air of sobriety; it has a grand destiny to fulfill, after all, and can't be bothered with even a backward glance at the travail that accompanied its birth.

And directly in front of you? A city built to the sky from the sweat of the Irish and Scottish, Slovak and Italian, Greek and African, Jewish, Syrian and Chinese. Steel, glass, coal and coke. Stone masons, stained glass artists, steelworkers and miners. It's not an idle saying that "Pittsburghers have muscles on their breath."

When God sculpted this world, carving four riverways through our city—the underground Wisconsin Glacial Flow carries more water beneath us than do the visible rivers combined—it was only going to be a matter of time until people gathered here.

Indeed, the Shawnee, Delaware and Seneca peoples arrived 1,000 years before the earliest French explorers "discovered" this Gateway to the West.

A great Pittsburgher who frequently climbed Mount Washington to look down upon this magnificent scene saw something even more amazing than the rivers and industries and barges and bridges.

"The untapped conviction and belief in this city," Sam Shoemaker said in a 1955 *Time Magazine* article titled "God and Steel in Pittsburgh," "mean more to it than all the coal in the hills and all the steel in the mills. If we could train and mobilize that force, Pittsburgh would become a spiritual pilot plant for America."

Shoemaker frequently took heads of industry up Mount Washington and led them in getting on their knees and praying for their city.

"I have a vision," he repeatedly told them, "that one day Pittsburgh will be more famous for God than for steel."

These are haunting sayings. "The untapped conviction and belief in this city." How vast a treasury is that? "Pittsburgh will be famous for God?" What would that look like? What would the people of God be doing, if they were fully tapped, that would cause their city to be known for God? How would their industries be constructed? What would their art be? How would their innovations change the nature of living? What would their poor be doing now?

It is said that "you can't know a place if you don't know its dreams."

Orthodox, Catholic, Pentecostal, Protestant and Anabaptist alike dream in this town about a day when "thy kingdom come, thy will be done in Pittsburgh, just as it is in heaven."

We suffer from the knowledge that there is a vast untapped treasury of human beings in this city. And we still get on our knees on Mount Washington to pray that Pittsburgh will be known for God.

Welcome to Pittsburgh. Welcome to her beautiful rivers and striking skyline. Welcome to her storied past and promising future. More importantly, welcome to her dreams and her spiritual legacy. When you visit our city—whether it's for the Mennonite convention or on another occasion—take the richness of God's favor on this place into your heart and soul ... and then return to your own favored places emboldened to serve there with the same ardor with which we serve here.

If we could train and mobilize that force, Pittsburgh would become a spiritual pilot plant for America.—Sam Shoemaker

—John Stahl-Wert is president and CEO of Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation (www.servingleaders.com), founder of the PULSE program (http://www.pulsepittsburgh.org), co-founder of the Union Project (www.unionproject.org) and member of Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

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One hundred things lighter

Man gives away one item every day for 100 days; proceeds benefit MDS

Patricia Leary

Ted Houser poses in his garage with items he plans to give away in Lancaster, Pa.

Every day since August, Ted Houser of Lancaster, Pa., finds something he owns to give away or sell—an item of clothing, electronics, bike equipment and more. Inspired by the *New York Times* article about a couple who pared down their possession to only 100 items, Houser decided to give away 100 items in 100 days.

Houser lives in an 850-square-foot carriage house in downtown Lancaster and is a member of Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster.

"I am forcing myself to be more intentional about the act of reducing my possessions," Houser wrote in an e-mail on Oct. 28. "This process is not unlike dieting. If you shed the weight too quickly, you're just going to put it right back on. ... By stretching this project out over time I have had opportunity to reflect on why I am doing this and to share my experience with others."

His sister Amy sent him the original article, thinking it would interest him. She and Houser's fiancé, as well as other acquaintances, have joined him in this downsizing exercise.

Houser uses his Facebook page as a way to promote the 100 items, find homes for them and track his progress. He posts a photograph of each item, a caption describing it and, for some, a price. Many items are free, but all proceeds Houser receives go to Mennonite Disaster Service.

"Facebook has allowed me to share this experience with others," he said. "If I had simply dropped everything off at Goodwill, there would have been no discussion, no reflection, no learning."

Houser's Facebook friends post comments inquiring about the item and offer to purchase or take it off his hands. One Facebook exchange looks likes this:

Houser: "Sept. 7 Day 31 of 100. Sony portable AM/FM radio. Runs on AC or batteries. $2."

Herr: "If the AM reception is good I'll take it. Just put it on my tab."

Houser: "I have no idea how the AM reception is. But it's yours. Sold! Another $2 goes to the shining services of MDS."

While entertaining to Facebook friends, Houser admitted that managing this public "disbursement process" remains the most challenging aspect of the exercise.

"Once I decide to get rid of something, I want it out of the house," he said. "If I threw it in a dumpster I'd get that immediate satisfaction. ... I've opened myself up to a lingering pile of junk in my garage."

As of Nov. 15, the sale of 100 items totalled "several hundred dollars" for MDS, Houser said. He planned to move the remaining items of value to Craigslist (with proceeds again to MDS) and the remaining items from Craigslist to charity.

"None of the items that I'm getting rid of are junk, so it won't be hard to find homes for everything," he said.

Houser says he thinks about "containers" a lot during this experiment. When he moved away from his carriage house for one year, he said he "accumulated crazy amounts of stuff." But when he moved back, he scaled back. Houser believes it's easier to limit consumption by limiting containers.

> This process is not unlike dieting. If you shed the weight too quickly, you're just going to put it right back on.—Ted Houser

For example, he said, "I have one bookcase. All my books are in that case. It's full. If I get a new book, I have to decide which one to get rid of. Likewise, I have one closet. All my clothes are in that closet. No dresser, no hall closet. One closet. If I run out of hangers, I get rid of clothes."

"A lot of us are addicted to consumption," he said, "My 'less is more' experiment is news because it runs in contradiction to the way that most of us live. It's consistent with our religion but not with who we are." Houser's 100-day exercise began Aug. 8 and ended Nov. 15.—*Anna Groff*

$10.40 for peace

Tax resistance campaign launches

What can underpaying $10.40 from a federal income tax return accomplish? A lot, according to John Stoner of "$10.40 for Peace: Move America Toward Peace."

$10.40 for Peace is a symbolic tax resistance campaign.

"The journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step," he said on Oct. 22.

Through this campaign, Stoner and a core group of five other individuals in Lancaster, Pa., invite other U.S. taxpayers to join them in opposing U.S. military spending when they file their federal income tax returns (Forms 1040) and underpay $10.40 each year.

The movement calls participants to then redirect the $10.40, or a similar amount, to peaceful purposes, for example the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill.

Stoner says the group hears some concern from individuals about the possible penalties and "heavy hand of the IRS coming down."

Stoner's response is threefold. First, "As disciples of Jesus, we shouldn't have so much fear," he says. Second, the past experiences of individuals who have withheld taxes for similar reasons have been minimal. Third, the tax withholder can decide later to pay the full amount.

"The most important thing is to make that statement that calls for democratic conversation about how federal money is spent," Stoner said.

Others say this movement should take more risks and that U.S. war spending remains too large. However, if enough people join, the risks and penalties would increase, Stoner said.

The website 1040forpeace.org offers sample letters for individuals to rewrite and send to the IRS when they withhold the $10.40. One letter written by Harold Penner of Akron, Pa., states: "I am not opposed to paying taxes. I willingly pay that portion of my tax liability that goes toward peace-oriented systems and supports life. But I am a religious conscientious objector to the death and destruction that the military apparatus represents and am compelled as a disciple of Jesus to take this action."

The campaign welcomes leaders to start local chapters.

Shane Claiborne has endorsed the movement and made the following statement on the website, "I'm very excited to be part of 1040 for Peace. Glad to be plotting goodness and stirring up holy mischief with you."

"He's quite committed," said Stoner.

The group is planning a public meeting in January in Lancaster with Claiborne as a speaker.—*Anna Groff*

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Photo Claybottom Farms, Goshen, Ind by John Tr

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Indonesian Mennonites reach out to disaster victims

Providing food, medicine, counseling, massages and haircuts to 1,300 people.

Paulus Hartono

Villagers in the Wasior region of Papua, Indonesia, clean up after flash floods in October.

Indonesian Mennonites have been struggling to keep up with relief efforts following at least three natural disasters that have come in quick succession.

On Oct. 26, the Mount Merapi volcano erupted in Magelang, Central Java. Because of the relatively close proximity of Mennonite churches, Mennonite Diakonia Service (MDS)—the peacebuilding and service arm of the Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI) Mennonite church —opened a shelter in the village of Sewukan.

When Merapi erupted even more strongly on Nov. 6, the government extended the danger zone, so the Sewukan shelter then had to be relocated to the safe zone.

Many GKMI churches, especially those in Central Java and Yogyakarta, are sending volunteers and logistical help to run the shelter. The volunteers provide food, basic sanitation services, trauma counseling, children's activities and medical care to some 1,300 people who were evacuated from their homes. One church sent volunteers to give free haircuts and massages to victims.

In an e-mail update to the GKMI churches, MDS director Paulus Hartono wrote, "Fruits, face masks, baby food, baby milk, blankets, drinking water, staple food and biscuits are needed, as well as volunteers—especially to help with cooking, because many of the survivors are already suffering from extreme exhaustion and acute trauma."

At the time of writing, almost 300,000 people had been evacuated from the 20-kilometer radius danger zone. There is no indication of when it will be safe for evacuees to return to their homes. Even those who do not live in the danger zones must deal with thick ash that covers roads, runways, buildings and farm lands and can also cause respiratory problems.

The Merapi volcano eruption, however, eclipses an earlier tragedy that has had less international exposure: In early October, flash floods devastated Wasior, an area on Indonesia's easternmost large island, Papua. MDS and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) initially responded by offering relief supplies and trauma counseling for about 300 people from two villages affected by the floods.

"They have lost everything," said Paulus Hartono upon his initial visit to Wasior. "Their houses were flattened to the ground, and we found many cases of acute trauma here." The flooding killed more than 100 people and injured hundreds of others.

Unlike the response to the Merapi disaster, the Wasior effort has been slower and more laborious because of its remote location. Sending volunteers and logistical help from Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, to Wasior, for example, would involve a 5.5-hour plane trip and eight hours by boat, plus driving time to reach the affected areas. Even so, MCC and MDS are now working to raise funds to rebuild 100 houses. MCC has committed $20,000 for this project.

At the same time, MDS is also seeking ways to respond to the Oct. 25 tsunami that hit Indonesian Mentawai Islands, about 800 miles away from Mount Merapi. Although there are no GKMI churches in the area, MDS is sending a team to assess the situation and explore ways to help.

> We must not forget Mentawai. People there are isolated, marginalized and were already suffering from frequent earthquakes before this tsunami hit.—Paulus Hartono

"All we hear on the news is the Merapi eruption because of its proximity to major cities," said Paulus Hartono on Nov. 8, "but we must not forget Mentawai. People there are isolated, marginalized and were already suffering from frequent earthquakes before this tsunami hit."

Mount Merapi and the Mentawai Islands both lie along the world's most active fault line, known as the Pacific Ring of Fire.—*Elina Ciptadi-Perkins of Mennonite World Conference with reports from Paulus Hartono and Paulus Widjaja; statistics on the Merapi and Mentawai disasters are from* The Jakarta Post

Third Lausanne gathering nets Capetown Commitment

Stanley Green reports on the Oct. 17-25 conference held in South Africa.

Photo provided

Mennonite Mission Network executive director Stanley Green with a list of the 198 countries represented at CT2010.

With a theme from 2 Corinthians 5:17, "God, in Christ, Reconciling the World to Himself," the third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (commonly called CT2010) met Oct. 17-25 in Cape Town, South Africa. CT2010 followed the second Congress held in Manila, Philippines, in 1989 and the first Lausanne Congress, convened by Billy Graham in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974.

CT2010 has been referred to as the most diverse Christian gathering in the history of the Christian movement: 4,200 participants and 1,100 volunteers from 198 countries around the world met at the southern tip of Africa continent in a gathering infused with the rhythms of the global south.

In what Desmond Tutu first called the "rainbow nation" (referring to the multicultural diversity of South Africa), the rainbow people of God from all continents and varied cultures met to reflect on God's call to the church in the 21st century. Fully 68 percent of the participants at CT2010 were from the global south, and two-thirds of the presentations were by Christians from the south.

Furthermore, some 200,000 people at 750 GlobaLink sites were able to participate, making this the first truly global virtual gathering. The capacity needed to make this possible exceeded by far that required for South Africa to host the World Cup soccer event.

One reality detracted from the richness of the event: 200 Chinese house church Christians who were invited to the event were prevented from coming by the Chinese government, which confiscated their passports or detained them.

The diversity was further reinforced by the fact that 35 percent of the participants were women. The Lausanne and Manila gatherings championed the role of women, but at Cape Town it was assumed; the gifts and callings of women were acclaimed. In addition, younger leaders were visibly present, since 55 percent were under 50, and 10 percent were under 30.

This diversity was not only reflected in the demographic variety among the participants, but also in their convictions. The Lausanne Movement historically distinguished itself by a vigorous defense of the priority of evangelism. At CT2010 there were those from the West who reiterated this call. With the preponderance of southern voices there was a fresh framing of the gospel in terms of transformation that impacted people's social, physical, material and spiritual circumstance. This was made poignant when a diminutive Indian woman, Pranitha Timothy, stepped to the microphone and announced, "I free slaves." She was not speaking figuratively or in a limited spiritual sense. She was referring to the 27 million slaves held against their will, 15 million of whom are children in India.

At CT2010, evangelicals moved beyond the conflicts that have plagued the Western church, often framed by the fundamentalist and social gospel controversies of the post-World War II era. In the stories that southern Christians shared of their attempts to follow in the way of Jesus in their witness in the world, a new comprehensive embrace of God's mission and the transforming power of the gospel for all of human existence was evident.

CT2010 hinted that the future of the Christian movement will most likely be shaped by a woman from the south, born in this century, who shares her story about her attempt to follow Jesus in the incarnation of his love and compassion for those who suffer and struggle in their brokenness, their lostness and in their victimization as the "sinned against."

At the final session, a team of theologians from each of the continents presented Part I of a document called The Cape Town Commitment (www.lausanne.org). By the end of November, Part II, which will consist of particular calls and strategies in mission, was to be published.

Thirty Mennonite and Brethren in Christ leaders from each of the continents participated in CT2010. Given the shape of the conversations at the event, most of these Anabaptists would have had little difficulty feeling at home.
—Stanley Green

MCC service workers invest in their communities

Young adult led backpacking trip and program at Cheyenne Native Assembly.

Tina Schrag

From left: The 2010 Summer Service Workers for MCC Central States are Amy Villarreal, La Grulla, Texas, La Grulla Mennonite Brethren Church; Ivette Medina, Metairie, La., Amor Viviente; Cary Black, Mashulaville, Miss., Mashulaville Dormitory; Aranza Torres, Waco, Texas, Hope Fellowship; Curtis Elkshoulder, Busby, Mont., White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church; Karla Quintanilla, Richardson, Texas, Iglesia Cristiana Menonita Mi Redentor; and Jaime Martinez, La Grulla, Texas, La Grulla Mennonite Brethren Church.

When Curtis Elkshoulder found a way to serve both his Native American community and White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church this summer, he did not let his normally reserved nature hold him back.

"I had the willingness to take on and face any hard challenges that may have come my way," he says.

Elkshoulder was a participant in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S.'s Summer Service Worker (SSW) program, a leadership development program that enables young people of diverse backgrounds to serve their home communities through a church or other agency.

Elkshoulder's responsibilities at White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church in Busby, Mont., included organizing a youth backpacking trip, helping with Vacation Bible School and leading a youth program at the Cheyenne Native Assembly.

"These tasks would bring me to understand my personal purpose is to be a leader," Elkshoulder says.

These tasks would bring me to understand my personal purpose is to be a leader.—Curtis Elkshoulder

Along with Elkshoulder, Amy Villarreal and Aranza Torres were among the seven SSW participants who served in the MCC Central States area. They learned more about themselves and how to lead others to meet needs in the community.

Villarreal, from La Grulla, Texas, worked directly with her church, La Grulla Mennonite Brethren, by leading her youth group in a program called SOAR S. (South) Texas, a 10-day discipleship training program that trains and sends out teams of youth to regional churches. Villarreal helped her SOAR S. Texas team organize Vacation Bible School, lead youth activities and clean up flooded homes in La Grulla.

"It touched my heart to be able to represent Christ through all that we do," the 21-year-old student says.

Aranza Torres, 16, of Waco, Texas, worked to increase awareness about Habitat for Humanity by hosting events that promoted the nonprofit Christian housing ministry. She interviewed homeowners who had partnered with Waco Habitat for Humanity and presented what she had learned to the Waco community.

Through her work, Torres had the opportunity to connect with and listen to many different people.

"I will never forget the power of community," she says, "and how working toward something makes all the difference."

A key component to the success of young adults in the Summer Service Worker program, says coordinator Kim Dyer, is the support of the church for the workers.

"It's the role of the church to walk with the participants to help them achieve their leadership goals.

"This program prepares our young adults for the future. They are not only current leaders but also future leaders in our churches and communities."

—Arthur Kauffman and Tina Schrag of Mennonite Central Committee Central States

Training leaders brings celebration and challenges

Ukrainian Seminary graduation ceremony represents years of effort, sacrifice.

Olga, a middle-aged Sunday school teacher in a Ukrainian village, stepped off the platform at Odessa Theological Seminary clutching her certificate of study as her husband bounded up to her with a congratulatory bouquet of flowers.

For Olga, who'd been attending seminary part-time for two years, her graduation day represented years of effort and sacrifice by both herself and her family.

Years of work and study came together for about 50 students in four different programs at the Ukrainian seminary's June graduation ceremony, which was the biggest in several years. For teachers like Mary Raber, the graduation was a reminder of how "right" things can be—especially after the normal challenges and frustrations of a school year.

Raber, a Mennonite Mission Network worker who lives and teaches in Ukraine, served as advisor to four bachelor degree students at the seminary. All these students wrote major research papers and defended them at an oral exam.

Although Raber wasn't sure one of the students, Konstantin (Kostya) Strelianyi, would be able to pull together all the resources he needed, she was pleased to see the methodical way he tackled his project and the "good" rating he received from the committee.

"He [Kostya] is now all excited about offering a few lectures on the history of the evangelical movement in Ukraine at his home church," Raber says, "and I'm confident that by now his level of research means that he knows what he's talking about.

"I felt reassured as I thought of all these graduates turned loose in the world," writes Raber, "each one faithfully living up to his or her own particular calling."

Odessa Theological Seminary began as Odessa Bible School in 1989, when new freedoms in the Soviet Union allowed religious groups to begin teaching publicly. More than 180 students began their studies there. After four years of nonresidential work, these preachers and Sunday school teachers graduated from the school with degrees in church ministries. They were appointed as pastors and deacons in various cities, and in these cities they started some of the first preaching ministries and Sunday school programs of the post-communist era. In 1991, the school was reorganized as Odessa Theological Seminary, but the school's mission—to train church leaders—remained the same.

Raber, who has had connections with the seminary since 1993, began a term of service with Mission Network in 2009. Her work fits well with Mission Network's mission to train and equip local leaders.

After a summer break from teaching, Raber began a new school year on Aug. 30. In addition to her work with undergraduate students, she also helps coordinate a master's program in applied theology, training church leaders for ministry in a post-Soviet context.

The master's students are involved in full-time ministry, so finding time to study is a challenge, especially since the students are reading in English—which is not their first language.

Too many of the students had fallen behind in their work to justify the program's partners at International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague sending a professor for the module scheduled for this fall, so Raber wrote to the students suggesting a week of "study hall" on the Odessa campus instead.

"Nobody took us up on the offer," says Raber, "but I think they'll turn in enough work so that we can go on with the program in February."

Photo provided

Mary Raber, a teacher at Odessa Theological Seminary, and her advisee, Konstantin Strelianyi

Ashot Gyurjyan is one of the master's students in Odessa's program and a good example of the program's main goal of further preparing active ministers and teachers.

He works at Armenian Theological Seminary, and Raber visited with him while she spent two weeks teaching there.

"Ashot is a preacher and teacher whose advanced studies will strengthen the academic program there," she says.

While in Armenia, Raber taught two classes, Spiritual Life and Ministry and Introduction to Social Service Ministry, to Christian education students. At the end of October she spent a week at Donetsk Christian University (in eastern Ukraine) teaching Christian education to a mixed class of pastoral ministry and mission students.

—Melanie Hess of Mennonite Mission Network

Nebraska church produces immigration banners

Thirty are now on display in other places across the country.

God's Love Has No Borders! Immigration Reform Must Be Just." When David Orr, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Neb., read that slogan on magnets being distributed by the Mennonite Peace and Justice Support Network, he says he thought, "That message belongs in front of our church."

The congregation's economic justice team agreed. With permission from Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA, they produced banners in English and Spanish and displayed them in front of their building.

With anti-immigrant laws being enacted in Arizona and across the country, including here in Nebraska, … it is time for us to make our position clear.—David Orr

"For seven years our denomination has been committed to acting 'with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status,'" Orr said in a sermon before the banners were displayed.

"With anti-immigrant laws being enacted in Arizona and across the country, including here in Nebraska, and with a developing national conversation, it is time for us to make our position clear."

The economic justice team agreed to produce additional banners for other congregations and groups wanting to communicate their concerns regarding immigration.

Since the banner dedication at First Mennonite in June, they have been receiving orders and now have about 30 banners displayed locally and in various other states, said Orr on Nov. 8. Purchasers have included churches, schools, religious societies, individuals and institutions.

First Mennonite received a small grant from Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska, the state council of churches, to distribute free banners to six churches.

"They were eagerly accepted by pastors, but after they were delivered, we waited a long time for them to appear," said Orr.

Deciding what to do with the banners led to important conversations. Some congregations started studies on immigration before displaying the banners.

One church considered cutting off the bottom of their banners to remove the words, "Immigration Reform Must Be Just." A couple of congregations returned their banners unused.

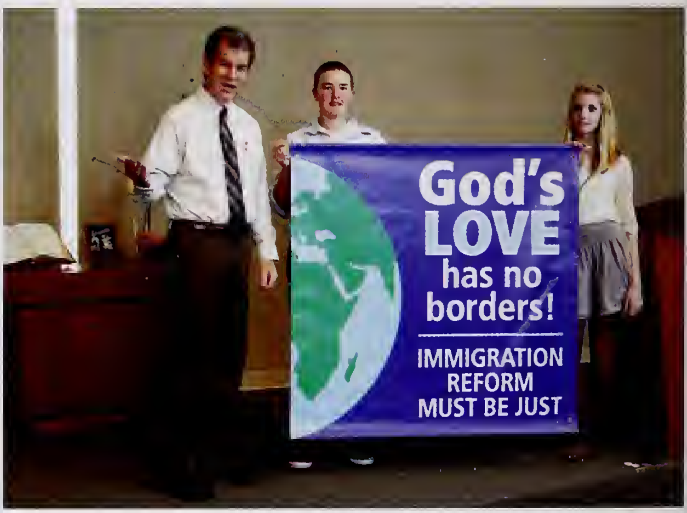
The four-foot square, heavyweight vinyl banners are available at cost for $40 plus shipping from First Mennonite. Visit www.fmclincoln.org/immigrationbanner for information or to order. English and Spanish versions are available.

Banners can be produced in custom sizes and configurations and may be ordered with or without the Mennonite Peace and Justice Support Network website address.—*First Mennonite Church*

God's LOVE has no borders!
IMMIGRATION REFORM MUST BE JUST

Sharon Orr

First Mennonite Church members processed to the church's front lawn for a prayer during the dedication of the banner on June 27.


God's LOVE has no borders!
IMMIGRATION REFORM MUST BE JUST

Sharon Orr

From left: Pastor David Orr, Caleb Thiessen and Sarah Troyer stand with the banner dedicated on June 27. The two youth are high school students at First Mennonite.

RESOURCES

Building Cultures of Trust by Martin E. Marty (Eerdmans, 2010, $22.99) proposes ways of improving conditions for trust at what might be called the grassroots level. Marty maintains that citizens must put energy into inventing, developing and encouraging "cultures of trust" in all areas of life—families, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces and churches.

The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology, edited by John Polkinghorne (Eerdmans, 2010, $30), presents 13 scholars from physics and theology who explore the role of relationality in both science and religion. Their discussion of analogous insights ranges from quantum entanglement to Trinitarian theology.

Mission and Migration: Latin America—A Global Mennonite History by Jaime Prieto Valladares (Good Books, 2010, $11.95) is the first comprehensive history written by Latin American Mennonite historians about Mennonite church life in Central and South America. It is the third volume in the Global Mennonite History Series initiated by Mennonite World Conference in 1997.

Hidden in the Rubble: A Haitian Pilgrimage to Compassion and Resurrection by Gerard Thomas Straub (Orbis Books, 2010, $18) captures in words and photos the reality of Haiti's poor—both their suffering and their spirit—and finds in this reality the face of God.

Seasoned with Peace: Winter: Practical Help for Becoming a Biblical, Prayerful, Playful peacemaker, compiled by Susan Mark Landis, Lisa J. Amstutz and Cindy Snider (2010, $15.95), includes work by more than 60 volunteers who want to make quality peace devotions available and raise money for Mennonite peace and justice work. It includes devotions for every day, Jan. 1 through March 31.Order from www.seasonedwithpeace.com.

Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific and Theological Engagement by Thomas Jay Oord (Brazos Press, 2010, $29.99) interprets the scientific research on such virtues as self-sacrifice and responds from a theological and philosophical standpoint, providing a state-of-the-art overview of love and altruism studies.

Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do by Phillip Cary (Brazos Press, 2010, $14.99) explains that discipleship is a gradual, long-term process that comes through experiencing the Bible in Christian community, not a to-do list designed to help us live the Christian life "right." He covers 10 things we don't have to do to be close to God, skillfully unpacking the riches of Christian spirituality.

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Pastors preach on leaked Iraq war logs

Isaac Villegas starts 'Proper 29 Project,' asks pastors to join him.

Mennonite pastor Isaac Villegas called on pastors to preach on the Iraq war logs that were leaked in October. These reports revealed the American and British complicity in the deaths of civilians in Iraq, including deaths by torture.

"Proper 29 Project," started by Villegas and three other individuals, asked that from the beginning of November until Nov. 21, pastors address the violence in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nov. 21 is Reign of Christ Sunday (Proper 29).

According to the project's website, the goal was to "provide a forum for homiletic engagement with our moral culpability as Christians in the United States for civilian deaths and torture in Iraq and Afghanistan and for witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ as we process the news that British, U.S. and Iraqi forces have killed more than 66,000 civilians."

Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship and a columnist for *The Mennonite*. He informed all the pastors he knows about the project—many of whom are Mennonite.

"Jennifer Davis Sensenig from Harrisonburg, Va., did a sermon … a couple weekends ago," Villegas said on Nov. 15. "I'm happy to say that she submitted the very first sermon. What I've heard from Mennonite pastors is that they are grateful for the idea and they will see what they can do."

Negative responses: Some non-Mennonite pastors told Villegas they would receive negative responses if they preached about this issue. "It's hard here in North Carolina," he said on Nov. 4. "Our economy is tied to the military-industrial complex."

Villegas told one story he read that he cannot forget: "In 2006, in the town of Samarra, 100 kilometers north of Baghdad, Khalib was in a rush to get to the hospital. His pregnant sister, Nabiha, was his passenger. She was in labor, and Khalib had to get her to the hospital. They made their way down the usual streets. But down one street the U.S. military set up a checkpoint.

"The soldiers perceived the approaching vehicle as a threat, so they opened fire and ended up killing Nabiha and the child in her womb. She was 35, and the dead baby was a boy. War is never kind to women and children, especially to pregnant women."

Proper29.wordpress.com is the website.—*Anna Groff*

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Three Sister Care seminars draw 122

After 'bowl of tears,' participants were anointed with 'living water.'

Mennonite Women USA's Sister Care seminars brought 122 women together in Idaho, Oregon and Washington on three gorgeous October weekends. The seminar was offered in three locations to accommodate the distances between congregations in the Northwest.

The seminar was co-presented by Carolyn Holderread Heggen, who serves on the Mennonite Women USA board, and Rhoda Keener, Mennonite Women USA executive director with materials they have authored with board president Ruth Lapp Guengerich.

"Sister Care acknowledges women's gifts of caring and equips them to respond more effectively and confidently to the needs of others in their lives and in their congregations," Keener said.

The Sister Care seminar integrates biblical stories and truths with psychological insights.

"What we believe about our personal worth and identity makes a difference in how we care for others," Heggen said.

Women came to the seminar to grow in understanding of their calling to care, to learn how to better care for themselves and others and to deepen their ability to listen in healing ways for one another. Each seminar included personal stories from several women about experiences of loss and grief. The closing worship invited participants to first share a "bowl of tears," then anoint each other from a second bowl with the "transformative living water" that Jesus offers. The seminar provides time for women to connect around welcoming tables.

"The time around tables was invaluable to process what we heard," says Jo Miller, a participant from Bigfork, Mont. "Upon returning home, we met with our church elders to share about Sister Care. We couldn't stop talking about the impact it had on us."

Kathy Bilderback of Boise, Idaho, sums up the seminar: "Between nibbles of chocolate and refreshing bottled water, we visited our own life stories to find the hues of color representing the events that have brought meaning in our lives. As we listened, we learned how to bravely set boundaries so that we might honor each other. We delved into the healing power of listening and practiced listening when courageous women among us shared their journey of loss and the grief that ensued."—*Pat Hershberger*

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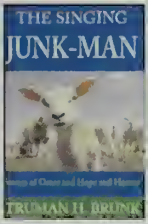

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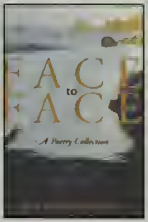

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CALENDAR

A presentation of the cantata, "David, the Shepherd Boy," is being planned for 2011 as part of the "Fine Arts Series" at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church. Marvin Miller will be the conductor. Practices will be held on the Thursday evenings of March 10, March 17 and March 24, 7-9 p.m.; Saturday morning and afternoon on March 26, 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday afternoon on March 27, 2-4 p.m. The program will be presented on Sunday evening, March 27, 6 p.m. All singers are invited to participate in this exciting and inspirational musical event. Any questions may be addressed to: Paul Wenger, e-mail at pwenger4@comcast.net, or telephone at 941-870-3737.

WORKERS

Amoretti, Pablo Fernando, was ordained for church planting ministry with the Anabaptist Fellowship of Charlotte on Oct. 23 at Mountain View Mennonite Church in Hickory, N.C.

Bowman, Jonathan D., was ordained as associate pastor of Christian formation at Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Oct. 1.

Chartrand, Bruce, was ordained as pastor of care and nurture at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y., on Oct. 17.

Garber, Derrick B., began a term as lead pastor at Chestnut Hill Mennonite Church, Columbia, Pa., on Oct. 24.

Gerber, Lowell K., began a term as interim pastor at New Danville (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Oct. 31.

Gibbs, Stephen, began a term as interim pastor at Landis Valley Christian Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Hollinger, Clyde, began a term as associate pastor at Millport Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa., on Oct. 3.

Horning, Carl E., began a term as interim bishop for Manheim District, Manheim, Pa., on Nov. 1.

Hurst, J. Nevin, was licensed as associate pastor of nurture at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on Oct. 17.

Kaufman, S. Roy, Freeman, S.D., retired as pastor of Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, on Aug. 31, concluding 38 years of full-time pastoral ministry.

Landis, Karl, was licensed as lead pastor at Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Oct. 31.

Martin, Kerry, began a term as lead pastor at Millport Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa., on Oct. 3.

Sebastian, Walter "Jerry," was licensed as pastor at Riverside Mennonite Church, Harman, W.V., on Oct. 2.

Yoder, Chester E., began a term as chaplain at Garden Spot Village, New Holland, Pa., on Sept. 1.

OBITUARIES

Ahijevych, Mykola, 99, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Sept. 29 following an extended illness. Spouse: Maria Marunchenko Ahijevych (deceased). Children: Svetlana Miller, Mykola Jr., Anatol; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 4 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek.

Bennett, Mary Elizabeth Tressler, 81, Salisbury, Pa., died Oct. 19. Parents: John B. and Annie Eichorn Tressler. Children: Barry, Kim Bennett, Cynthia Bennett; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Springs Mennonite Church, Springs, Pa.

Bontrager, Levi "Lee" J., 87, Shipshewana, Ind., died Oct. 6. Spouse: Anna Mae Yoder Bontrager (deceased). Parents: John and Barbara Miller Bontrager. Children: Gerald, Donald, Mike; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 11 at Firs Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Brunk, Truman H., 79, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 8. Spouse: Elizabeth "Betty" Shenk Brunk. Parents: Truman and Ruth Smith Brunk. Children: Kathleen Brunk Isaacs, Donald Wayne Brunk; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

Buckwalter, Elizabeth Griffith, 86, New Holland, Pa., died Sept. 26 of esophageal obstruction. Spouse: Nathan P. Buckwalter (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Mamie Mull Griffith. Children: Betty Jane Beard, Joanne Wenger, Nathan, Richard; seven grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Deputy, Lelia Esther Eberly, 70, Singers Glen, Va., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Ronald Deputy, Sr. Parents: Marion and Reba Rhodes Eberly. Children: Ronald, Jr., Reba Deputy Heizer, Anthony, Raleigh; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Dintaman, Walter, 81, Elkhart, Ind., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Clara Wideman Dintaman. Parents: William and Susan Seidner Dintaman. Children: Linda Martin, Lisa Skinner; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 15 at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Eash, Donald E., 82, Wellman, Iowa, died Oct. 6. Spouse: Fern Swartzendruber Eash. Parents: Wallace and Laura Doolin Eash. Children: Michael, Merridy Leichty, Martin; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 9 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Eklich, Robert J., 36, North Canton, Ohio, died unexpectedly on Oct. 5. Spouse: Maria Sommers Eklich. Parents: Frank Sr., and Mary Eklich. Child: Kyle Benjamin. Funeral: Oct. 8 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Gering, Earl, 89, Freeman, S.D., died Oct. 19 of heart failure. Spouse: Marian Graber Gering. Parents: Joe D. and Caroline Preheim Gering. Children: Garnet Perman, Brad; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Glanzer, Paul Jacob, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 21 of a stroke. Spouse: Eva Sonifrank Glanzer. Spouse: Lola Derstine Bower Glanzer (deceased). Spouse: Isabel Gingrich Glanzer (deceased). Parents: Joseph Paul and Theresa Kleinasser Glanzer. Children: David, James, Dennis, Jerry; step-children: Millard Sonifrank, Merlan Sonifrank, Eldon Sonifrank, Nelson Sonifrank, Evelyn Sonifrank Strawderman; eight grandchildren; eight step-grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Good, Lawrence E., 85, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 26. Spouse: Grace S. Bower Good. Parents: Allen and Hannah Gross Good. Children: Larry, Phil; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Good, Lloyd, 91, Eureka, Ill., and Rantoul, Ill., died Oct. 2. Spouse: Verda E. Hershberger Good. Parents: LeRoy and Leah Eichelberger Good. Children: Nicholas, Pete, Jeffery, Katrina Cline Good; eight grandchildren; one great-grandson. Funeral: Oct. 6 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Hostetter, Mary L. Hollinger, 86, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 30. Spouse: Harvey M. Hostetter. Parents: Mahlon and Katie Leaman Hollinger. Children: Helen Hershey, Carolyn Martin, Kathy Mast; nine grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Habecker Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Lehman, Verl O., 92, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 9. Spouse: Vesta Metzler Lehman (deceased). Parents: Clarence and Bertha Christophel Lehman. Children: Jean Moyer, Ruth Ann Yoder, Carol Lehman, Larry, David; 12 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen.

Leichty, Ruth Eleanor Earnest, 75, Iowa City, Iowa, died Oct. 1. Spouse: Lowell Leichty. Children: Greg, Phil, Kathy Sands, Ruth Giesking, Mark; 13 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Moyer, Raymond M., 82, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 13 of pneumonia. Spouse: Ruth Hendricks Moyer. Parents: Elmer and Sadie Moyer. Children: Glenn, Earl; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

King, Betty Ruth Detweiler, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Aaron Martin King. Parents: Elmer and Lillian Detweiler. Children: Michael, Jewel, Robert, Steven Wiebe-King, Marty, Noel, Heidi King, Starla Manne, Angela; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

King, Martha E. Lugbill, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 11. Spouse: Maurice King. Parents: Eli and Jennie Burkholder Lugbill. Children: Linda King, Bonnie Beck, Karen Koellein, Bill; 13 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 15 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

King, Martin M., 75, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 4. Spouse: Mable Sensenig King. Parents: William J. and Lizzie Martin King. Children: Larry L., Kenneth, Janet Martin, Janet L. High, Carol J. Ecenrode; 13 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 8 at Ephrata Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa.

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Mennonite Central Committee

Krabill, Verdella S. Widmer, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 15. Spouse: Maurice E. Krabill (deceased). Parents: Edward and Edna Boshart Widmer. Children: Don, Joyce Stutzman, Phyllis Krabill, David; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 18 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen.

Lange, Melvin F., 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 25. Spouse: Ruth Marilyn Drewes Lange. Parents: Alvin and Marie Lange. Children: Philip, Stephen, Daniel, Tim, Pamela Meyers; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Miller, Margaret M., 84, Shipshewana, Ind., died Nov. 13. Parents: Homer J. and Lizzie Troyer Miller. Funeral: Nov. 16 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Ramer, Gloria Lucille Shank, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 21. Spouse: Roy Ramer. Parents: Lowell and Mildred Love Shank. Children: Mark, Tena Baker, Tammy Funderburk; seven grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Randolph, Brenda Kay Drake, 61, Elkhart, Ind., died Oct. 8 following a 15-year-long illness. Spouse: Donnie Randolph. Parents: Wilbur and Pauline Taulbee Drake. Children: Sandra Lehman, Howard Randolph, James Huser, Ron Huser, Bill Huser; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Marion Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Schrag, Mark, 56, Marion, S.D., died Oct. 17 of pancreatic cancer. Former spouse: Audrey Tieszen. Parents: Orlando and Verda Preheim Schrag. Children: Eian, Nathan. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Schrock, Ervin R., 95, Wellman, Iowa, died Aug. 16. Parents: Daniel and Anna Roth Schrock. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Yoder-Powell Funeral Home, Kalona, Iowa.

Swartzendruber, Alta Fern Miller, 91, Kalona, Iowa, died Sept. 14 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Morris E. Swartzendruber (deceased). Parents: Benedict "Ben" and Cora Maude Miller Miller. Children: Gareth, Marlene Yoder, Virginia Christophel, Lorraine Munk, Lyndon; 16 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Sunnyside Conservative Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Swartzentruber, Clayton Laban, 82, Lansdale, Pa., died Aug. 12. Spouse: Margaret Louise Risser Swartzentruber. Parents: Laban and Nanna Swartzentruber. Children: Don, Jon, Evon Swartzentruber Bergey, Lon, Ron; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 16 at Dock Woods Community Chapel, Lansdale, Pa.

ENTER

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One congregation's journey to becoming a safer place for children
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walking together
50mm 1:1.8 II

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'09 Illustration: Wilford D. Yoder

'09 Work, Service, Play: Marcia Widmer

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Your work may be chosen for future publication in *The Mennonite*. For photo categories and submission instructions, go to www.TheMennonite.org

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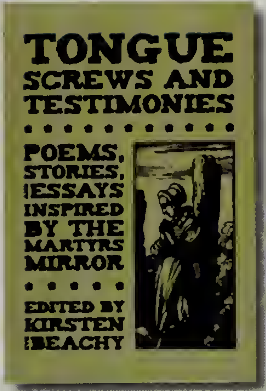
Herald Press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EDITED BY KIRSTEN BEACHY

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Thomas, Dorsey E., 74, Conemaugh Twp., Pa., died Oct. 9. Spouse: Joyce M. Kauffman Thomas. Parents: Freeman J. and Fanny Kaufman Thomas. Step-mother: Cora M. Hostetler Thomas. Children: Darlene Chestney, Orville, Beverly Logue, Imogene Thomas, Sherman, Arnold, Marilyn Thomas, Karmela Trout, Evelynn Thomas, Loransa Thomas; 20 grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Thomas Mennonite Church, Hollsopple, Pa.

Trissel, Chlora Fern, 95, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 10. Parents: John H. and Lillie Hess Trissel. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Strite Auditorium at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

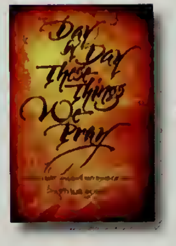
Welborn, Jack, 80, Fisher, Ill., died Sept. 16. Spouse: Virginia Eichelberger Welborn. Parents: J.H. and Della Moore Welborn. Children: Steve, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Yoder, Ada J. Miller, 81, Nappanee, Ind., died Oct. 21. Spouse: Eldon Yoder. Parents: John E. and Mary Alice Yoder Miller. Children: Lois Kandel, Peg Leatherman, Jean Yoder; four grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee.

Yoder, Carl V., 82, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 18 of cancer. Spouse: Martha Diller Yoder. Parents: Elmer and Lizzie Yoder. Children: Keith, Stanley, Ted; three grandchildren; four step-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Yoder, Ivy Jane, 17 months, Kalona, Iowa, died Oct. 5. Parents: Trent and Tammy A. Nordman Yoder. Brothers: Sam, Henry. Funeral: Oct. 11 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Herald Press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Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for a ***half-time associate director of pastoral studies*** position. The position is responsible for a variety of roles that help make pastoral studies available in the Lansdale and metro-Philadelphia area. This role includes directing the STEP program at its extension in Philadelphia, teaching one graduate seminary course each semester, developing continuing education opportunities for local church leaders and presenting potential students in the area with sufficient information to help them determine what seminary program(s) are most applicable to their needs. Doctoral degree preferred in a discipline that lends itself to leadership in Christian ministry. Must demonstrate ability to perform a variety of basic administrative and management skills, to teach graduate-level seminary courses and to connect well with students and prospective students. Supportive of the mission and policies of Eastern Mennonite University. Position begins January 2011. Twelve-month, half-time (20 hours per week) position. Submit application, resumé and three references to: hr@emu.edu. For more information visit our website at www.emu.edu/humanresources. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes in Goshen, Ind., seeks candidates for ***executive director***. The ED is responsible for all programs, staff and activities in the GL region and is responsible to the MCC GL board. The ED will play a key role in guiding the transition as GL works with all of MCC to implement new vision and structures. The position requires: familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills, cultural competency, strong Christian faith and practice, ability to relate and build relationships with theologically diverse constituents and partners, ability to articulate Anabaptist theological perspectives as the foundation of MCC's work, and passion for and commitment to MCC's mission and vision. Experience with budgeting and administration also required; fund-raising experience preferred. Position includes significant travel time within the region. A job description is available at http://mcc.org/serve/positions/executive-director-great-lakes. Submit resumé and letter of interest by Dec. 31, 2010, to: Prem Dick at: psd@mcc.org

Amigo Centre, a camping and retreat ministry of Indiana-Michigan Conference, is accepting applications for a ***full-time executive director***. Candidates interested in more information should contact Sharon Heatwole at skyheatwole@live.com. Information about Amigo Centre and its ministry can be found at www.amigocentre.org. Application accepted through Dec. 31, 2010.

Conference minister search. **Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference** is seeking a ***full-time conference minister*** who will provide leadership and vision to support local congregations and pastors, nurture relationships with emerging congregations and church plants, and strategize for mission from a uniquely Anabaptist perspective. This goal is lived out in largely urban settings that are rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. The conference office will be in the greater Los Angeles area. For a job description, please contact Ruth Suter at rsuter@sbcglobal.net.

Environmental education faculty: **Goshen College** invites applications for a full-time, 12-month ***assistant professor of environmental education*** at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center to teach graduate and undergraduate classes, guide curriculum development and advise students. One-quarter time will be given to research in interdisciplinary topics of environmental education. Ph.D. or Ed.D. required in a field of environmental education. Interdisciplinary experience in curricular design and implementation required. For further details and to apply, see position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment. With a commitment to building a diverse faculty and staff, minority people are encouraged to apply.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

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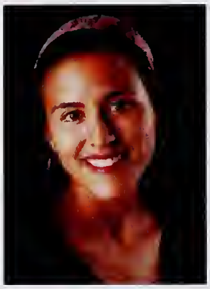
Those of us who bring you TheMennonite wish you God's richest blessings during this season of hope and light.

Left to right: Anna Marie Groff (assistant editor), Celina Romero (bookkeeper), Gordon Houser (associate editor), Rebecca Helmuth (circulation and advertising coordinator), Everett Thomas (editor), Dee Birkey (designer). Not pictured: Nora Miller (proofreader) and Martha Graber (reads *The Mennonite* on audio cassettes).

Therapy junkies in the shadows



Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz is a member of San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

"I guess they'll figure it out in therapy," is a common comment made among my fellow mom-friends when speaking about their young children and their difficulties in parenting.

In expressing this, subconsciously, they acknowledge and accept how their parenting does not measure up and consequently how they share some of the responsibility that their children may need professional help once they've come of age.

Now this might be true, and we all may find ourselves in 20 years paying for our children's therapy bill, but I wonder if this is more of a reflection of where my generation is than where we anticipate the future will be.

Therapy junkies live in the shadows. As a society we are pretty oblivious to the large number of people and couples who have sought out counseling. There still remains a stigma for reaching out and a measure of criticism for paying the common above-the-$100 mark per hour. But once you've found yourself in that place of desperation, loneliness or confusion, the unsolicited recommendation of caring friends is professional help—no matter what the cost. There may come a time when the need for direction and healing take precedence over moving in the same direction, usually the wrong direction.

Therapy remains an individual exercise rarely incorporating community or church.

And today I can include myself among the masses. Whereas months ago the idea of going to therapy was an accusation of having a disability or weakness, I now see it as part of my journey of learning how to live out the wholeness I've always had but didn't know how to access. I've found rest in accepting that there are areas where I am sick and need the great Physician to heal me.

Among my friends, I conducted an informal survey in which I asked who had received or was receiving therapy, who wished they could receive it and who had never received therapy. Out of the 35 who responded, 22 had been or currently are going to a therapist, five wished they could go, and eight had never gone.

These numbers surprise me. Not only is it the majority but almost three-quarters of these women have sought out an outside voice to provide comfort, direction or clarity. One of these mothers spoke of the benefit therapy can have for all of us throughout our lives.

Yet as helpful as therapy has been, there is one part of the therapeutic experience that has not set well with me. Privacy and intimacy with your therapist is essential for going to those inner dungeons that need Christ's light to shine, yet in some form therapy remains an individual exercise rarely incorporating community or church.

There is a disconnection our society has established between the inner life and communal fellowship, and my hope is that Christians who seek out therapy also find among other believers acceptance, safety and above all prayer for this journey. For people like myself, it takes humility to admit I am weak and need help, and even though this is easier for me to accept now, it still feels like I carry around with me a secret illness—one that would not be appropriate for me to give updates on during the worship sharing time, as I would if I had newly diagnosed diabetes or cancer.

At what point is it helpful, not only for the patient but for the congregation, to know who is seeking professional counseling and for the congregation to lift that person up in prayer and emotional support?

While sitting with her spouse in the waiting room before her appointment, a friend spoke of the time when unexpectedly a fellow couple from her church entered. The unwritten rule in such situations, she says, is to keep the silence, barely looking at each other in the eyes, as if with shame or embarrassment—whereas in a church setting, they may have greeted each other and made small talk. Yet here, for some reason, that congenial conversation feels awkward if not inappropriate.

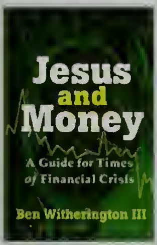
This reaction tells me that as a society we have not been honest about our common confusion and disappointment in life. As Christians, we need to admit that being a perfect Christian is not the point. The point is to find strength in humility and abounding grace in community. TM

FILM REVIEWS

Waiting for Superman (PG) follows a handful of promising kids through an educational system that inhibits rather than encourages academic growth. He surveys "drop-out factories" and "academic sinkholes" but also points to directions for meaningful change. While many will debate the film's evenhandedness, viewers come away with a sense of how important education is for the functioning of a healthy society. And good teachers are the main key toward that end.—*Gordon Houser*

Hereafter (PG-13) will likely appeal more to viewers who are at ease with the subject of the afterlife and less to those who are not, a divide the film itself explores. After a stunning opening scene of a tsunami, the film slows considerably and at the end depends on coincidence for its climax. Nevertheless, it manages to skirt sentimentality and simplistic answers to a topic largely ignored by mainstream films.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEWS



Jesus and Money: A Guide for Times of Financial Crisis by Ben Witherington III (Brazos Press, 2010, $18.99) offers a concise look at what the Bible says about money or wealth. Although Witherington warns against anachronism, he looks for ways of translating that teaching into our time. He especially warns against the prosperity gospel and calls readers to some practices that seem commonsensical, though needed. He does challenge some pervasive myths about the Bible's teaching and instead offers some clear thinking.—*gh*

The Gospel in Solentiname by Ernesto Cardenal (Orbis Books, 2010, $30) reveals the wisdom of the poor and oppressed reflecting on the Gospels in their context, in this case peasants and artisans in Solentiname, Nicaragua, during the Somoza dictatorship in the 1970s.—*gh*

The American religious experience

Our lives, our religious lives, are lived in context. And that context for most of us is an American one. We should then pay attention to America's religious experience and how that has affected our culture.

In October PBS aired *God in America*. (In case you missed it, it's available for viewing online at pbs.org.) This six-hour series looks at 400 years of religious experience in what became the United States of America.

The series examines, according to its website, "how religious dissidents helped shape the American concept of religious liberty and the controversial evolution of that ideal in the nation's courts and political arena; how religious freedom and waves of new immigrants and religious revivals fueled competition in the religious marketplace; how movements for social reform—from abolition to civil rights—galvanized men and women to put their faith into political action; and how religious faith influenced conflicts from the American Revolution to the Cold War."

Narrated by Campbell Scott, the series uses documentary footage, historical dramatization and interviews with religious historians to present various religious movements in U.S. history.

The first episode, "A New Adam," looks at how the New World challenged and changed the faiths the first European settlers brought with them, from Catholic missionaries preaching to Pueblo Indians in the Southwest to Puritan leaders such as John Winthrop in New England. It also considers the evangelical revivals inspired by the preaching of George Whitefield.

Episode two, "A New Eden," considers the origins of America's experiment in religious liberty and the unlikely alliance of evangelical Baptists and enlightenment figures such as Thomas Jefferson.

Episode three, "A Nation Reborn," explores how religion suffused the Civil War. It looks at the division over slavery and figures such as Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Episode four, "A New Light," considers how the forces of modernity challenged traditional faith and drove a wedge between liberal and conservative believers. It talks about Bohemian immigrant Isaac Mayer Wise, who established Reform Judaism in America, and Presbyterian biblical scholar Charles Briggs, then discusses the 1925 Scopes trial about evolution.

Episode five, "Soul of a Nation," explores the post-World War II era and evangelist Billy Graham, who tried to inspire a religious revival that fused faith with patriotism in a Cold War battle with "godless communism." It also looks at Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement.

Episode six, "Of God and Caesar," discusses conservative evangelicals' moral crusade over social issues like abortion and gay marriage and how their embrace of presidential politics ended in disappointment and questions about the mixing of religion and politics. It looks at how new waves of immigrants from Asia, the Middle East and Latin America have made the United States the most religiously diverse nation on earth.

Why take six hours of your time to look at America's religious history? Because we learn from where we've been. And that history affects who we are as believers in the United States.

The series looks at how religious dissidents from Europe helped create our nation's emphasis on liberty and independence. The religious diversity here is an outgrowth of America's religious experience in the last 400 years. As we seek to be missional, we need to learn about our context. TM

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

OCTOBER 2011 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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BIBLICAL
SEMINARY

People of the Old Testament

By Jeanette Baer Showalter

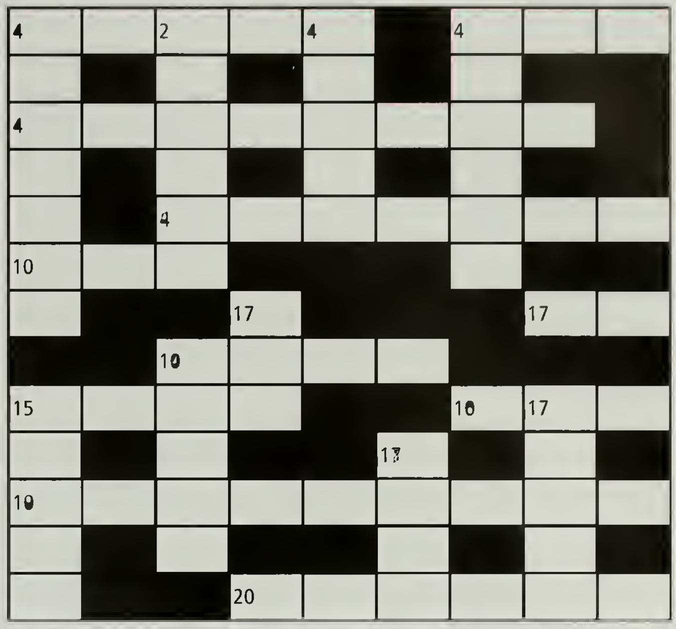
All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. The second king of the United Kingdom of Israel.
4. He was fed by ravens.
7. She was the daughter of Elon the Hittite and became the wife of Esau (Gen. 26).
8. A son of Noah and father to Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.
9. Egyptian queen during the time of Solomon and David; she raised her nephew, Genubath in the palace (1 Kings 11).
10. Daughter of Zechariah, wife of Ahaz, and mother of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:2 KJV only, Abijah in NIV).
12. The eighth king of Judah; he was age 7 when he became king and reigned 40 years (2 Chron. 24).
14. Naomi chose this name to express her bereavement.
15. A wicked son of Judah who was put to death by the Lord (Gen. 38).
16. The mother of Joseph and Benjamin.
19. First of the 10 sons of Haman, advisor to Xerxes; the sons were killed by the Jews in a decree of the king at Esther's request (Esther 9:7).
20. She taunted Hannah since Hannah did not have children.

DOWN

1. The fifth judge of Israel (Judges 4-5).
2. She refused to exhibit herself when her husband King Xerxes requested she do so.
3. A son of Ishmael (Gen. 25:14) and alternate name for Edom (Is. 21:11).
4. She became Xerxes' queen when the first queen was banished.
5. Son of Asa and a Godly king of Judah, but he later allied himself with Ahab (2 Chron. 17-20).
6. He plotted to destroy all of Mordecai's people (Esth. 3:6).
11. A son of Jacob and Bilhah; he shall judge his people (Gen. 49).
13. A prophetess consulted by Josiah; she prophesied about Jerusalem's destruction but that Josiah would not have to witness it (2 Chron. 34:22).
14. An Amorite with whom Abram allied himself against Kedorlaomer of Elam (Gen. 14:13).
15. She married Kilion, a son of Naomi; she returned to her people after his death.
17. A son of Micah; King Josiah sent him with others to ask the Lord about the Book of the Law and they spoke with the prophetess (number 13 Across - 2 Chron. 34:20).
18. The first murderer.



RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our February 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

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Jan. 1, 2011

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ANSWERS TO THE DECEMBER PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 56.

Continued from page 5

Phoenix churches who deal daily with this issue as found in the June 15 issue of the *Christian Century*.

We have been serious and prayerful as we pondered the words of Jesus in Luke 4 regarding Jesus' mission statement: "He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor … and to proclaim release to the captives."

In our discussion, the following ideas were raised with regard to the 2013 conference:

1. Plan the entire conference around the theme of immigration ("Who is My Neighbor?").
2. On Peace Sunday in our churches, invite pastors to give sermons on immigration as well as invite Hispanic Mennonite congregations to worship with us or worship at their church.
3. Listen and learn from Latino/Hispanic congregations.
4. Raise $400,000 above the convention budget if the convention is held elsewhere. Use the money to support immigrants.
5. By not having the conference in Phoenix, this would enhance communication and could nurture meaningful conversation and problem solving.
6. Have a Christian Peacemaker Team presence for each Hispanic person at Phoenix.
7. Plan meaningful witness actions if the conference is in Phoenix or elsewhere.
8. Wherever the conference location, we suggest attendees support service workers by tipping generously —up to 40 or 50 percent.
9. Our question: "What kind of public policy/systemic change should the church seek and support? We encourage readers to see Mennonite Central Committee websites for further ideas.—*21 members of the Seekers*

The Mennonite is full of immigration news, especially since Arizona passed the harsh immigration law that raises many questions about whether Mennonite Church USA should hold its 2013 assembly in Arizona as previously planned before SB 1070 came out.

In 1971, I was at Navajo Community College on the Navajo Reservation in northern Arizona, helping establish the first Native American-controlled college in the United States and Canada. One day I was eating with some Navajo faculty friends when one of them (a Ph.D. from Ohio State University) put his fist under my nose and said, "Oswald, as soon as we can, we are going to send you Anglos packing back to Europe."

History is often a hard teacher. It has shown that we are occupiers of this land. We are illegal immigrants. In the name of the King, gold, God, land and slavery we came. It was posed as a directive from God (manifest destiny) that we Europeans should take over this land for our ever-increasing European hordes.

When we are considering the immigration issues, in all honesty, let us Europeans remember that we are not only illegal immigrants, we are occupiers. And we Mennonites are part of the European hordes that so happily homesteaded on the lands Native Americans were forced to flee from. The apology ("Mennonites Apologize to Native Americans," October) is only one small apology. Mennonites in the United States and Canada owe Native Americans many such apologies.—*Evan Oswald, Glendale, Ariz.*

Consumerism and immigration

If the United States wants to reduce the number of immigrants coming from Mexico and other nations, it needs to work for justice for the millions of poor and working people in Mexico and other nations. Instead, the U.S. government routinely and deliberately sides with filthy rich elites abroad and U.S. corporations to rob and kill the poor. Most immigrants would prefer to stay in their native lands if living conditions there greatly improved.

If the United States wants to reduce the number of immigrants from Mexico and other nations, we Americans need to change our lives to live simply and fairly in the world family of 6.8 billion people. Most of the money most Americans spend is for crap no one needs. I lived well last year on $3,965 for my total expenses. We need to stop glamorizing U.S. greed, cars, big houses and crazy consumer crap in U.S. movies and magazines that go to Mexico and other nations. U.S. movies and magazines seduce people abroad to come here and get addicted to the stupid crap most Americans are addicted to.—*Don Schrader, Albuquerque, N.M.*

Appreciated the poem

I so appreciated the glimpse of Everett Thomas' family in the poem "Thanksgiving" (November). I especially respond to the line, "I give thanks for the wisp of life in between."—*Karen Schmucker, Milford, Ind.*

Thank you for sharing Everett Thomas' "Thanksgiving" poem in the November issue. It was a very touching poem and the picture is a classic.—*Karen Gingerich, Parnell, Iowa*

I read Everett Thomas' prose poem in tribute to his brother and family (November). It made Thomas' family come alive to me. What a wonderful reflection on all of their lives! Thank you for sharing this touching remembrance with us all in the church.—*Mark King, Elkhart, Ind.*

Thank you for Everett Thomas' prose poem in the last issue of *The Mennonite*. We found it full of love for his family.—*Phyllis and Bill Miller, Goshen, Ind.*

First things first The first share of the crops

The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.—2 Timothy 2:6 (TNIV)

This is the last column in my series dedicated to keeping first things first. It seems fitting, then, to feature a passage that sets forth the rewards of the Christian life for those who labor in God's kingdom. In 2 Timothy 2:1-7, the Apostle Paul compares Timothy's work to three lines of work—that of a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. Each of these occupations requires discipline, hard work and more than a little patience.

In other correspondence to churches, Paul draws on one or more of these analogies. See for example, Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Corinthians 3:6-9; 9:7-12, 24-27, Philippians 3:13-14 and 1 Timothy 5:18. Perhaps the most important is 2 Timothy 4:7-8, where he says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." All of these Scriptures provide words of comfort to those who have spent years tending God's vineyard. As Paul declares, in a quotation from Deuteronomy, "workers deserve their wages" (1 Timothy 5:18).

Paul speaks not only of hard work but the struggle for self-mastery and willingness to suffer. In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins tells how his wife, Joanne, practiced full-time for three years to prepare for the women's triathlon. This strenuous event involves 2.4 miles of ocean swimming, 112 miles of cycling and a 26.2-mile marathon footrace. Her discipline and stamina paid off when she won the world championship.

Olympic hopefuls commit to hard training because they nurture the hope of a medal and a few moments on worldwide TV. In Paul's day, as in ours, Olympic championships brought recognition, fame and feelings of achievement. Yet Paul declared that the Christian race is even more worthy of disciplined endeavor than the Olympics.

Several years ago, I met Martin Marty, a well-known theologian and historian, who embodies strict self-discipline in pursuit of his vocation. Now professor emeritus at the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, he has written 50 books, 5,000 articles and carries honorary doctorates from 75 colleges and universities.

Marty was the commencement speaker at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. So several of us had a leisurely exchange around the breakfast table at president Loren Swartzendruber's home. In the course of conversation, Swartzendruber asked Marty how he has accomplished so much in life, including all his writing.

"Well, you know," Marty responded, "I'm Swiss. I work by deadlines."

And then he proceeded to show us three watches—one in his vest pocket, one on his wrist, and one from his pants pocket.

"My wristwatch has an alarm," he said. "I get up every morning at 4:44 am."

"Not 4:45?" Swartzendruber asked with amusement.

"No, 4:44."

Then Marty proceeded to tell us about his daily routines—which include walking 10,000 steps—and showed us the pedometer he uses to record them. As he talked, I discerned that he was not overly compulsive, but a caring and sensitive man who serves God with determination and discipline. He deserves a rich reward.

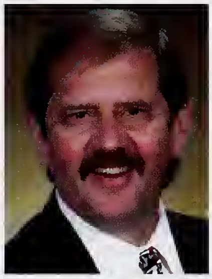
I would be remiss, however, if I gave the impression that one gains a reward in God's kingdom simply by working hard or exercising personal discipline. Mere human initiative does not bring in the kingdom of God. Rather, the cultivation of Christian disciplines opens the door to receive God's grace and empowerment for ministry. God's transforming grace in our lives is what truly imparts hope, both to us and the people to whom we minister. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA

FROM THE EDITOR

What child is this?



Everett J. Thomas

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.—Luke 1:47

The Advent season can be frustrating during our worship services. We want to sing Christmas carols that celebrate Jesus' birth at Bethlehem. We don't want to delay the celebration.

But Advent is the season of pregnant hope and Mary's wonderment. During this time when we wait, we can also imagine Mary asking the question, What child is this?

It helps to put ourselves in Mary's place and imagine what the months of pregnancy might have been like for her.

After traveling to visit Elizabeth in the Judean hill country, she stayed with Elizabeth and Zechariah for three months. Luke records Elizabeth's greeting as well as Zechariah's prophecy after their son—later known as John the Baptist—was born.

Mary was still pregnant when she heard Zechariah say to his infant son, "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways."

Again, Mary perhaps asked, What child is this?

This Advent season, our family is living with a similar question. Our daughter is pregnant with our first grandchild, a boy. When I look at her or when we feel the baby kicking, I ask the same question: What child is this? What will he look like? What will he be like? What will he do with his life?

It is during this prenatal period that we dream and imagine the possibilities for the future. So, too, for Mary and Elizabeth and Zechariah. In doing so, perhaps they remembered the words of the prophet Isaiah:

In the days to come ...
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

These verses are part of a larger text designated for this year's Advent season in the worship material provided in *Leader*. They call us to dream of a world not yet here. They call us to, once again, make this a season of pregnant hope.

During the Advent season, we get in touch with the possibilities of peace offered by an infant in a manger whose birth is announced by an angel to anonymous shepherds:

Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom
he favors!

Our culture overwhelms us with a Christ-less Christmas. The Advent season is the opportunity to extricate ourselves from the sacrilege. We can do so by following Mary's lead at the Annunciation: by magnifying the Lord.

"The season's texts," says the *Leader* material, "lift up almost unbelievable visions of God's joyful restoration of relationships among all God has made: humans and other creatures and the earth under our feet. We stop long enough to notice what's going on, God's generosity and creativity surprise us, and, catching the vision, we can't help but respond."

What child is this growing in Mary's womb? He is God made flesh, Immanuel. He is the one who will change the world. Advent season is the opportunity to imagine what can be born in us and what God dreams for us all.—*ejt*

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